ISLAM
THE IDEAL RELIGION

BY

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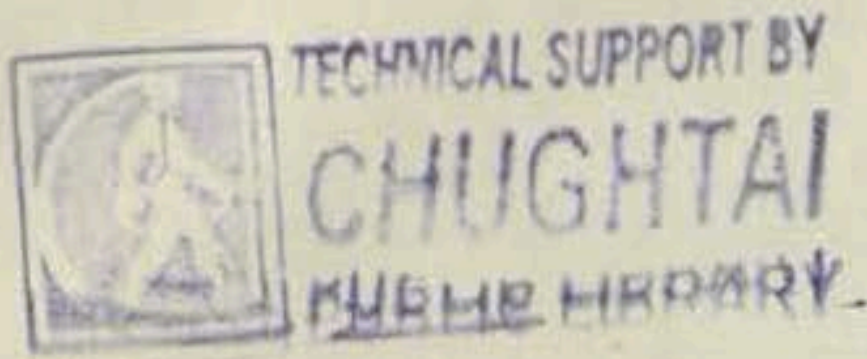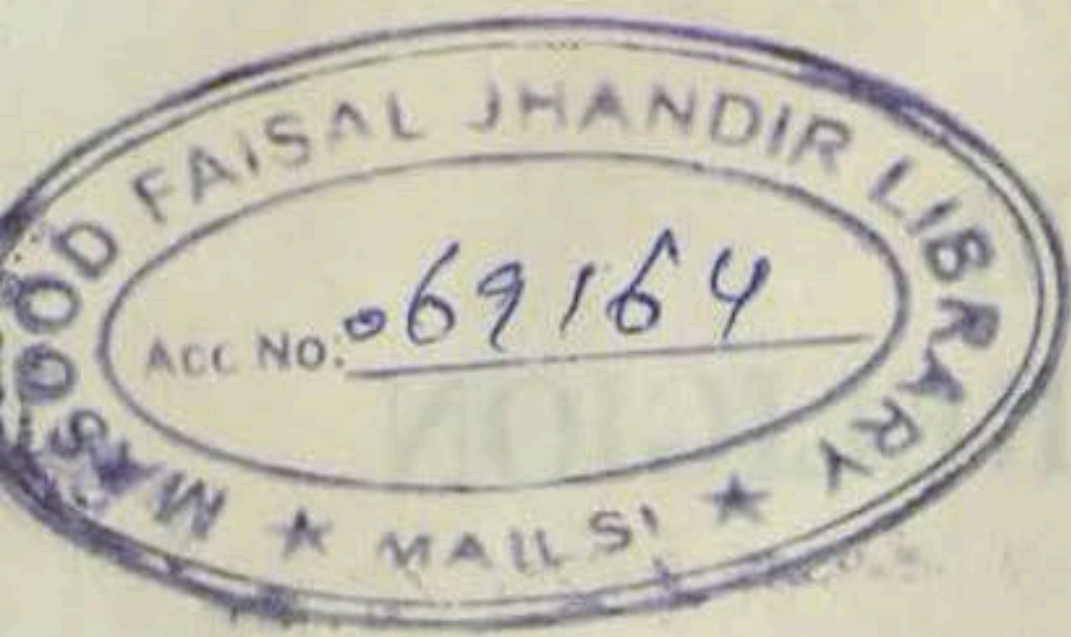
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Foreword

This book was originally edited in Arabic by Professor Sheikh Youssef El-Digwy of Al-Azhar University with the object of having it translated into English for the benefit of English-speaking people. The translation appeared in monthly articles in "Al-Azhar Review" published by Al-Azhar University, and it was deemed fit, in view of the many requests received from different parts of the world, to publish this translation in book form.

Contents

ISLAM

The Ideal Religion

I

ISLAM is a universal religion revealed to rectify the corrupted beliefs of mankind and to set the seal to previous Scriptures. It enjoins respect and veneration for all prophets and is not a religion of egoism that preaches hatred and animosity to others; nor does it require its followers to believe only in their particular prophet imputing prefidy and falsehood to those of other religions. Nay! the magnanimous spirit of Islam rises far above this, and enjoins the belief in all the apostles of Allah for thus Muhammad was addressed:

" و لقد ارسلنا رسلاً من قبلك منهم من قصصنا عليك . و منهم من
لم نقصص عليك " .

[" And We have sent apostles before thee; the story of some of whom We have told thee; and the story of others We have told thee not "]

in order to warn us against disbelief in or defamation of any of His prophets and to teach us to acknowledge that they were all sent with guidance, enlightenment and truth. The patriarchs and followers of anterior religions, however, have misconstrued and altered their texts and Islam was revealed to purify them from the taints of superstition and innovation and to lead mankind to the very sources of true belief. It honoured and revered their prophets and laid the responsibility of perverting on those who misconstrued and distorted the Word of Allah.

This is a fact which all just and unbiased people will readily admit. Supersititions, unsupported by tradition and not sanctioned by mind or conscience, crept into religions prior to Islam and the most flagrant errors and misconceptions could easily be traced in those religions, in the beliefs in Allah and His holy prophets and precepts ; the consideration of this we leave entirely to your own judgment.

Islam required mankind to believe in all prophets without distinction and addressed them thus :

" قُولُوا آمَنَّا بِاللهِ وَمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْنَا وَمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ

وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَالْأَسْبَاطِ وَمَا أُوتِيَ مُوسَى وَعِيسَى وَمَا أُوتِيَ النَّبِيُّونَ

مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِنْهُمْ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ "

[" Say ye believers: We believe in Allah and that which hath been sent down to us (The Qur'an), and that which hath been sent down to Abraham and Isma'il and Isaac and Jacob and his offspring; and that which was given to Moses[1] and Jesus[2] and that which was given to the prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them and to Allah we are resigned."]

It addressed the people of the Scriptures thus:

يَـٰأَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لَسْتُمْ عَلَى شَيْءٍ حَتَّى تُقِيمُوا التَّوْرَاةَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ وَمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكُمْ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ "

[" O People of the Scriptures! Ye have no reliable Faith until ye observe the Torah[1] and the Evangel[2] and that which hath been sent down to you from your Lord." (*Baidawy's Commentary*.)]

And:

" وَلَا تَشْتَرُوا بِآيَاتِي ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا وَإِيَّايَ فَاتَّقُونِ. وَلَا تَلْبِسُوا الْحَقَّ بِالْبَاطِلِ وَتَكْتُمُوا الْحَقَّ وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ "

["Ye shall not barter My signs for a paltry price and fear ye Me; and confuse not the truth

1. The Mosaic Law.
2. The Gospel.

with falsehood and conceal not the truth when ye know it." (*Baidawy's Commentary.*)]

Islam has led mankind to the pure founts of religion and freed their minds from the confusion of misguidance and superstitions. It appealed to them to shake off the torpor from their minds and to rouse their conscience by contemplation of Allah's blessings and marvels.

Thus it has thrown wide the door for reflection and has delivered mankind from the bondage of imitation.

It spared them the turmoils of faction, and enjoined that the Jew rever Jesus, that the Christian respect Moses and that all should venerate any messenger or prophet who might have been sent, unknown to us, to other people as pointed out in the verse:

" وَمِنْهُم مَّن لَّمْ نَقْصُصْ عَلَيْكَ "

[" And the story of others We have told thee not."]

Islam is, thus, a universal religion which relies on the mind as its sole arbiter and forbids the submission of man to man or the glorification of any creature.

The Islamic teachings which were revealed to the Prophet Muhammad to announce unto mankind, and the goodly exhortations which were sent through him, to purge the souls of recklessness and sin, constitute an irrefutable and unassailable argument in the face of the most virulent attacks of criticism. These teach-

ings are established on a solid substratum of reason which no criticism could affect or prejudice.

The tenets of Islam are purely intellectual and absolutely uncontaminated with delusion, superstitious beliefs or pernicious customs. They were not ordained in accordance with the consuetudinary approbation or censure of a particular people, but were instituted in strict accordance with intellectual truths established from all times and suited to all races of mankind.

It is for this reason that the message of Islam was universal; on account of its complete adaptability to all people in just the same way and same proportion; it was no more intended for the Arabs than for others or for urban than for nomadic communities; no wonder, therefore, that Islam is called the "Natural Religion!"

The teachings of Islam are classified into three main clauses :

1. Avowal of one Creator and the admitting of the Day of Judgment.

2. Actions which pertain to the Hereafter.

3. Actions which pertain to the regulation of temporal affairs and the amelioration of life's conditions.

These are the main divisions under which there are several other subdivisions, the consideration of which we defer for the time being.

As to the avowal of one Creator and the admitting of the Day of Judgment, they are nowhere more clearly ordained than in Islam. It is for this reason that monotheism in Islam is free from the defects from which other religions suffer, such as the doctrine of incarnation, trinity,. anthropomorphism,[1] negation of certain divine attributes and other doctrines which are definitely incompatible with the perfect divinity of Allah.

While followers of other religions are faced with the most serious complications and ambiguities which baffle the intellects, not only of the proletariat but also of the learned classes, Islam is absolutely clear on these points and both the proletariat and the learned classes are able fully to understand them. The teachings which were handed down to the followers of other religions were not of such clarity as to be understood without painstaking assiduity; they were so vague and ambiguous on so many points that inquirers were apt to lose their way in a labyrinth of complications.

As for the regulation of temporal affairs and the amelioration of life's conditions, Islam is decidedly a clear and limitless fount of information, and an end beyond which no one could aspire.

Islam rendered mankind a most inestimable service which previous religions had failed to offer;

1. The representation of the Deity in the form of man or with bodily parts.

nor could the master-minds of legislators interested in the organisation of human activities and the amelioration of social conditions, ever discover anything approaching it. It rigidly enjoined charity and benevolence towards the followers of other religions though they are the first, whose maltreatment would strike imagination as a possible religious injunction.

" وَلَا تُجَادِلُوا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ إِلَّا بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ "

[" Dispute not except in the kindliest manner with the People of the Scriptures " (*Baidawy's Commentary*)]

and the Prophet Muhammad says in this connection:

" مَنْ آذَى ذِمِّيًّا فَأَنَا خَصْمُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ "

[" Whosover inflicteth harm on a Zimmi,[1] will I be his adversary on the Judgment Day." (*Tradition.*)]

Islam enjoined that Muslims and all others should be treated on a footing of equity. This is clearly shown in various parts of the Qur'an and the Traditions in order to realise the fulfilment of justice and the maintenance of equity so that non-Muslims may feel secure under the rule of Islam and may

1. A Zimmi is a follower of the Scriptures under Muslim protection.

not find therein an unsupportable burden and also that they may procure their assigned share of the means of subsistence which Allah hath bestowed as common-weal upon all His creatures.

It forbade interference with their religions and did not compel their adoption of Islam ; this was in order that its own merits and clear teachings might be the sole incentive to its adoption. *In no instance, indeed, did Islam have recourse to the sword* to super-impose its will under penalty of death, as other religions did. The holy wars prescribed at the beginning of Islam were not waged to force people to profess that religion, but they were waged in order to defend it against outside attacks and to pave the way for its announcement and propagation so that the world, which was in desperate need of a new religion, might hear of it.

Islam enjoins kindly treatment of the neighbour, the wife, the friend, the parents and children and all kinsmen and others whether they profess it or not. This is prescribed in the most eloquent and clear language. It warned against deviation from these rules on penalty of severe punishment in the here-after and instituted such temporal penalties as were indispensable for the welfare of mankind.

Such, then, are the main teachings which con-stitute the truths of Islam. They were the light that shone on a world steeped in a Stygian dark-

ness of ignorance, penetrating its uttermost corners. It is the religion of nature for which nature will accept no other substitute.

The fundamental precept of Islam is the acceptance of monotheism and the purging of souls of sin and wickedness. Its texts clearly point out that salvation is the outcome of mental and moral striving and that deviation and perdition is the result of mental and moral inactivity.

A philosopher has rightly remarked in this connection that the great thinkers of the world have, even from of old, been deeply interested in the search for a religion which fulfills the material needs and the spiritual aspirations of mankind. They searched for one which combined these two in a just and harmonious accordance, thus establishing the right proportion between the respective claims of both in such a way as to keep them within bounds and to withhold the one from dominating the other. But they discovered it nowhere except in Islam, which guaranteed salvation in this world and the hereafter, and was not oblivious of either material or spiritual claims.

It is for this reason that the Islamic civilisation was assiduously pursued by mankind and that it spread in a fashion unprecedented in the annals of history.

Anyone who has studied history and social science must certainly find that this civilisation was the most progressive and farsighted of all civilisations and that

it has well-wielded the sceptre of authority over its followers and exercised the most astounding influence over their minds. It comprised the essentials of all human progress, *viz.*, learning and its application. Islam has left out nothing that tends to purge the soul of its impurities and thus fit it for the fulfilment of its function.

Islam thus became the crowning conclusion of all Allah's dispensations and the ultimate end of man's salvation.

It aimed at strict moderation throughout and strove for the purging of minds of the taints of delusion, directing them to the sources of truth and blessedness.

It is inconceivable, therefore, that such a religion could be liable to abrogation or be doomed to extinction.

Indeed, time and the progress of civilisation are, ever and ever, offering fresh proofs of the verity and greatness of Islam. Many of its teachings were considered in olden days as merely devotional and appeared to have no justifiable ground or known cause : such, for example, was the scouring with earth of any vessel which a dog has licked and washing it thoroughly with water, for the dog, it is now maintained, often harbours different kinds of parasitic helminths which infect the human body with devastating results.

Pork, which is now commonly known to be the cause of many diseases particulary tape worm and trichina[1] which play havoc with the human body and very often cause death, was also forbiden.

Abstinence from alcoholic drinks is another teaching of Islam. Science has definitely established the pernicious effects accruing from drinking. It weakens the heart, damages the kidneys, causes cirrhosis[2] of the liver, clouds the intellect and enfeebles the progeny.

Europe and America (consciously and unconsciously) are gradually coming nearer and nearer Islam and adopting its teachings day by day.

Non-Muslims were wont to condemn the institution of divorce in Islam. When, however, they found out that it was necessary for the progress of civilisation, and that it is unreasonable to force a man into continuation of matrimony in spite of incompatibility of temperament and inclination, they were obliged to adopt that institution. Divorce courts were therefore established and the number of divorce cases increasing year by year proves their necessity.

Then again the institution of polygamy. This institution evoked their bitter censure and condemnation. Subsequent events and disasters have, however,

1. A parasitic worm which infects the intestinal canal and the muscular tissue of man and certain animals especially the pig.

2. Inflammation and proliferation tending to destroy the liver cells and impede the flow of blood through the veins of the liver.

pointed to its efficacy under certain conditions and shown the advantages accruing therefrom. The consequent increase in the number of men, the following augmentation of power and the amèlioration of conditions in every sphere of life are too evident to be enumerated. The necessity of polygamy is particularly shown after devastating wars in which thousands upon thousands of men are lost to the race and countless numbers of women are rendered widows in consequence.

The Muslims have often been envied the great increase of their number within short periods ; this is on account of the prevalence of marriage among them.

We have lately noted with interest, the vigorous campaign conducted in the Christian press to encourage marriage among Christians. It is significant in this connection that the question of illegitimate children in Christian countries is assuming great dimensions and causing serious consternation and alarm ; this is because their people have turned from the lawful to the unlawful, from the limited to the unlimited and from truth and rectitude to hypocrisy and deceit.

England on her side has officially prohibited prostitution. It has recognised, as Islam did, the serious harm which affects the race when such a breach of morality is licensed by the state.

Another teaching of Islam is that in connection with speculation. Nations have introduced a law

prohibiting speculation save within certain limits very nearly identical with the teachings of Islam.

Yet another teaching of Islam is almsgiving; regarding this a French orientalist says:

> "The Muslim religion affords the most effectual safeguard against the menace of communism which threatens to disrupt the social structure and to shake the world-peace to its very foundations. This safeguard is almsgiving ordained by Islam and constitutes the payment of a portion of the wealth of the rich to the poor every year. It made it incumbent on the ruler to collect these alms even though he had to enforce their collection in the name of the law."

But the knowledge of this French orientalist is even deficient in respect to this matter. Islam has, over and above enjoining the payment of legal alms, urged its followers to secret and public charity and has forcibly insisted thereon. It urges them to lend the needy, and it has set more recompense for such charity than for legal almsgiving.

It ordained that loans should be given free of any interest or advantage accruing to the rich from the poor. Benevolence was thus rendered one of the rights of humanity, an obligation of the rich towards the poor.

This measure of legal taxation for alms is what certain parties in European countries persistently clamour for. They insist on the assessment of a levy on capitalists who contribute nothing to the public treasury in contradistinction to property and land owners.

There are other parties which call for the adoption of certain reformative measures corresponding, in more than one way, with the teachings of Islam ; for lack of space these cannot be mentioned here.

Briefly : intuitive, scientific and empirical knowledge have all combined to prove the verity and truth of Islam even in regard to the most transcendental questions as well as to other questions which were positively denied by past generations.

People were wont to deride the idea of the extinction of the luminary planets and the destruction of the universe until recent discoveries have shown that the celestial world is composed of the same constituents as this world ; they discovered that potassium, for instance, is a constituent element of the sun, that the heat of the sun is gradually diminishing and that the laws of this terrestial world obtain in the celestial worlds as well.

We have already pointed out that Islam is in complete harmony with the natural sciences. In fact, Muslim themselves were ignorant of the significance of many of the Quranic texts until the progress of natural

sciences disclosed the meaning thereof—as, for instance, the fertilisation of trees by winds which was only recently discovered. Over thirteen centuries ago the Qur'an referred to this phenomenon in the verse :

” وَأَرْسَلْنَا الرِّيَاحَ لَوَاقِحَ “

[" And We sent forth the fertilising winds."]

This verse was interpreted according to the standard of knowledge of the period, until its full meaning was at last disclosed and the verse stood out—a marvellous sign of the Holy Qur'an.

Again the verse

” وَأَنْبَتْنَا فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ زَوْجٍ بَهِيجٍ “

[" And We have caused to grow in it[1] all pairs of beauteous species"]

and the verse

” وَمِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَا زَوْجَيْنِ “

[" And of everything have We created a pair "]

and the verse

” سُبْحَانَ الَّذِى خَلَقَ الْأَزْوَاجَ كُلَّهَا مِمَّا تُنْبِتُ الْأَرْضُ وَمِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ

وَمِمَّا لَا يَعْلَمُونَ “

1. The earth.

["Glory be to Him who hath created all pairs of species of what the earth produceth,[1] and of mankind themselves and of what they know not." (*Baidawy's Commentary.*)]

Commentators used to interpret these verses according to the scientific standards recognised at the time. It wat not, however, until natural sciences discovered male and female species in plants, that we realised the full significance of those verses.

Again, such a verse as :

" حتى اذا أتوا على وادى النمل قالت نملة يايها النمل آدخلوا
مساكنكم لايحطمنكم سليمان وجنوده وهم لا يشعرون "

["Till they came to the Valley of Ants[2] ; said an ant, 'O ye ants, enter your dwellings, lest Solomon and his hosts crush you and they know it not.' "]

This verse was taken for a mere simile or a kind of metaphor until the entomologists unravelled many astounding mysteries in the life of ants and the real meaning of the verse was thereby disclosed.

II

The Holy Qur'an contains, moreover, the most striking references to animals which have caused the

1. Plants and trees.
2. A valley in Syria abounding in ants.

scientists of Europe no small amazement. An orientalist is said to have remarked in this connection that there is nothing more clearly significant of the importance of animals than the Quranic verse :

" وَمَا مِنْ دَآبَّةٍ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ وَلَا طَآئِرٍ يَطِيرُ بِجَنَاحَيْهِ إِلَّآ أُمَمٌ أَمْثَالُكُم "

[" No kind of beast is there living on the surface of the earth in any region thereof, nor bird that flieth in any clime with its wings, but are communities like unto you." (*Alucy's Commentary.*)]

Again, we were not aware of the magnitude of the Sirius[1] to which the Qur'an referred in the verse :

" وَأَنَّهُ هُوَ رَبُّ الشِّعْرَى "

[" And that He (Allah) is the absolute Lord of the Sirius worshipped in the days of yore to the exclusion of God." (*Alucy's Commentary.*)]

until recent discoveries disclosed that the Sun is a million and three hundred thousand times greater than the earth and that the Sirius is many times greater than the Sun and that the light of the Sun is one-fiftieth of the light of the Sirius.

Through the development of natural sciences, many astronomical, medical and geographical facts

1. The Dogstar or Canicula, the brightest star in the heavens, situated in the constellation of Canis Major, or the Great Dog.

referred to in the Qur'an were definitely established. Nor did social, ethical and economic questions lack corroboration. Recent scientific and philosophical researches have fully borne out the concepts of Islam.

Some of these concepts pertaining to the hereafter and the planes of the spirit world, have long been made the object of derision and ridicule. The establishment by Islam of spiritual, apart from material worlds, was considered mythical and absurd. It was not until a faint ray of light from that prodigious world filtered through to us by means of spiritualism, which is already fast becoming an established fact, that the deriders of Islam realised their mistake and were convinced of what the Qur'an says :

" وَمَا يَعْلَمُ جُنُودَ رَبِّكَ اِلَّا هُوَ "

[" And none is apprised of the varieties of Allah's creatures save the Lord Himself." (*Alucy's Commentary.*)]

They knew, through the manifestations of the spirit which has broken all known material laws, the secret of the Lord's saying :

" قُلِ الرُّوحُ مِنْ اَمْرِ رَبِّي وَمَا اُوتِيتُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ اِلَّا قَلِيلًا "

[" Say ! the spirit which is the cause of life is a hidden secret which the minds of men fail to comprehend and whose reality is only known to Allah. The knowledge ye are given in

that respect is but an iota compared with the infinite knowledge of Allah." (*Alucy's Commentary.*)]

Among other corroborative discoveries is the prohibition of drinking water contained in a copper vessel and left exposed to the sun in hot climes on account of the chemical reaction that takes place.

Another discovery is that of eating salt which certain Islamic traditions hold to be an effectual cure of many diseases. Medical men were at first dubious regarding its efficacy and were disinclined to endow common salt with such curative properties. The discovery, however, was made and the facts thereof published in medical journals, the discoverer having shown that a hypodermic injection of saline solution is a sure remedy for many ailments.[1]

Yet another discovery is the recognition of the advantages derived from ablution. Not only is it effectual against mouth and nose diseases, but it is also one of the most important preventive measures against consumption, the nose being the chief medium through which this virulent disease is contracted.

Small wonder, therefore, that the nose which is washed fifteen times a day should be completely free from the germs of this malignant malady. It is significant in this connection, that cases of consumption in

1. Dose 8 grammes of salt to every 1,000 grammes of water injected nder the skin.

Muslim countries are few and far between whereas they are decidedly more prevalent in other countries.

Again the Qur'an proclaimed that men were created out of dust—a fact which was completely unrecognised at the time of its revelation—as signified by the verse :

" وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ اَنْ خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ اِذَآ اَنْتُمْ بَشَرٌ تَنْتَشِرُوْنَ "

[" And of the signs of Allah is that He hath created you out of mere sorry dust, and then caused you to spread far and wide on the surface of the earth." (*Alucy's Commentary.*)]

This fact is now as well-known as it is indisputable. The germ of life owes its origin to nutriments derived from animals dependent for their life on plants, or from plants produced directly from earth.

Again the following verse is significant :

" بَلْ هُمْ فِي لَبْسٍ مِنْ خَلْقٍ جَدِيدٍ "

["Allah hath caused the first creation, but men are dubious of a new one." (*Alucy's Commentary.*)]

The Qur'an recognised the continual metabolism in man and that the tissues of the human body are periodically destroyed and renewed. The processes of anabolism and catabolism are ever taking place.

The Qur'an has further foretold the persecution

of the Jews and their continued suffering under the yoke of others as testified by the verse :

"وَ اِذْ تَاَذَّنَ رَبُّکَ لَیَبْعَثَنَّ عَلَیْهِمْ اِلیٰ یَوْمِ الْقِیَامَةِ مَنْ یَّسُوْمُهُمْ سُوْٓءَ الْعَذَابِ"

[" And thy Lord hath declared that He would surely send against the Jews, until the end of the world, those who would inflict on them severe punishment and subject them to tyranny and humiliation." (*Alucy's Commentary.*)]

In fulfilment of the above, the Jews were scattered all over the world. They were rutnlessly persecuted by the French in Algiers and hounded down and banished by the Russians and were, therewithal, hated, and despised wheresoever they set foot.

And "وَ لَنْ یَّتَمَنَّوْهُ اَبَدًا بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ اَیْدِیْهِمْ"

[" But they shall never wish for death on account of the sins they have committed."

(The Jews who worshipped the calf, claimed that Paradise is exclusively assigned to them to the exclusion of all other people. In refutation of their claims they were challenged to wish for death if they were so sure of going to heaven, but never will they wish for it on account of the sins they have committed.—(*Baidaway's Commentary.*)]

Nor was that the only prophecy that came true. The Qur'an prophesied many other future events as testified by the following verses:

"سَيُهْزَمُ الْجَمْعُ وَ يُوَلُّونَ الدُّبُرَ"

["The host of unbelievers shall be utterly routed and shall take to their heels."[1] (*Alucy's Commentary.*)]

"لَتَدْخُلُنَّ الْمَسْجِدَ الْحَرَامَ اِنْ شَاءَ اللهُ آمِنِينَ"

["Ye shall enter the Sarced Mosque by Allah's decree in full security."

(The Muslims were promised to enter Mecca in full security and this verse was revealed to the effect that they would enter the Sacred Mosque in Mecca; this entry was accomplished soon after.—*Alucy's Commentary.*)]

"غُلِبَتِ الرُّومُ فِي اَدْنَى الْاَرْضِ وَهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ غَلَبِهِمْ سَيَغْلِبُونَ"

["The Greeks have been defeated by the Persians in the nearest boundary town. But after their defeat, they shall overcome their foes."

(The unbelievers of Mecca rejoiced at the victory as the Persians were unbelievers like themselves and the Greeks were followers of Scriptures like the

1. This referred to the Battle of Badr in which the Muslims completely routed their enemies.

Muslims. This verse was thus revealed foretelling a victory of the Greeks over the Persians and was fulfilled a few years later.[1]—*Baidawy's Commentary.*)]

" سَنُرِيهِمْ آيَاتِنَا فِي الْآفَاقِ "

[" We will shew the unbelievers Our signs through the signal triumphs of Islam in distant climes."—(*Baidawy's Commentary.*)]

Recent discoveries have disclosed many undreamt of marvels of heavens and earth to which the Qur'an referred long before.

In this connection we should allude here to the possible meanings which many Quranic verses may be taken to imply. The rotation of the earth, for instance, could be implied by the verse:

" وَكُلٌّ فِي فَلَكٍ يَسْبَحُونَ "

[" And each one doth journey in an assigned orbit." (*Alucy's Commentary.*)]

In fact, the Qur'an does not contradict anything which science has definitely established and very often includes a reference to scientific facts or is at least in harmony therewith.

The verses:

" وَآيَةٌ لَهُمْ أَنَّا حَمَلْنَا ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ ".

1. The victory of the Greeks referred to in the verse took place about the third year of the Hejra.

[" And a sign unto the unbelievers is that We have caused their offspring to embark on full-laden craft in pursuit of trade." (*Baidawy's Commentary.*)]

" وَخَلَقْنَا لَهُم مِّن مِّثْلِهِ مَا يَرْكَبُونَ "

[" And We have created of the like of them such other things as they may embark on." (*Baidawy's Commentary.*)]

may be taken to refer to airships, etc.

Other modern vehicles could be inferred from the verse :

" وَالْخَيْلَ وَالْبِغَالَ وَالْحَمِيرَ لِتَرْكَبُوهَا وَزِينَةً وَيَخْلُقُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ "

[" Allah hath created among other animals, horses, mules and asses that ye may ride them and make use thereof in splendon and display: and other things which ye know not, doth He create." (*Alucy's Commentary.*)]

It is feasible to deduce that the earth was a part of the sun as is now established by astronomers, from the verse :

" أَوَلَمْ يَرَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ كَانَتَا رَتْقًا فَفَتَقْنَاهُمَا "

[" Have the unbelievers not known that the heavens and the earth were joined together in one solid mass and that Allah hath separated them and made of them distinct bodies." (*Alucy's Commentary.*)]

Again it could be easily inferred that the heavens were composed of nebulae[1] or diffused gaseous matter from the verse :

"ثُمَّ ٱسْتَوَىٰ إِلَى ٱلسَّمَاءِ وَهِيَ دُخَانٌ"

["After the creation of the earth, the Lord applied Himself to the creation of the heavens which were in a gaseous state."]

We quote there verses as we wish to point out that the Qura'n does not contradict the facts established by science ; nor is it unyielding to the proofs thereof to deserve to be called an enemy of science as is alleged by wily missionaries and misinformed Christians who know nothing of Islam.

Many European philosophers have, however, commended Islam and its teachings.

Bentham,[2] the great English philosopher and one of Europe's most able men of letters, has said that he who practises the tenets of virtue ordained by Islam will never commit a sin or perpetrate a crime.

1. The nebular hypothesis expounded by Laplace and Sir W. Herachel to the effect that nebulæ form the earliest stage in the formation of stars and planets.

2. Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) exponent of doctrine of utilitarianism summed up by Priestly as " the greatest happiness of the greatest number. "

Societies have been established of late in Europe and America to promulgate a new religion which they call "the natural religion ;" all the fundamental principles thereof are identical with those of Islam.

***

We will now proceed to consider the teachings of Islam in some detail.

Islam ordains to seek your own welfare, that of your own people, your neighbours and all others. It forbids exposing yourself to danger as ordained in the verse :

"وَلَا تُلْقُوا بِأَيْدِيكُمْ إِلَى التَّهْلُكَةِ"

["Allah ordains, not to throw yourselves with your own hands into destruction." (*Baidawy's Commentary*.)]

It forcibly warns against committing suicide and acts as a deterrent, through the love and veneration of Allah which it engenders in the hearts of men, to restrain people from exposing themselves to danger and rushing headlong into destruction.

Man-made laws exercise no such influence over mankind and utterly fail in restraining people from committing suicide. Hence the prevalence of this evil in Europe and America.

Islam enjoins esteem and kindly treatment of the wife—for thus the tradition ordains :

" خَيْرُكُمْ مَنْ كَانَ خَيْرُهُ لِأَهْلِهِ وَشَرُّكُمْ مَنْ كَانَ شَرُّهُ لِأَهْلِهِ "

["The best of you is he who is benevolent unto his people, and the worst of you is he who is malevolent unto them." (*Tradition.*)]

Also :

" اِنَّ الرَّجُلَ لَيُحْشَرُ مَعَ الْمُتَجَبِّرِينَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَلَيْسَ عِنْدَهُ غَيْرُ أَهْلِ بَيْتِهِ "

[" Verily, man will be huddled together with the overbearing tyrants on the Day of Resurrection and yet he has had no others to illtreat except his own folk." (*Tradition.*)]

The Holy Qur'an prescribes :

" لَا تَعْبُدُونَ اِلَّا اللهَ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ اِحْسَاناً وَذِى الْقُرْبَى وَالْيَتَامَى وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَقُولُوا لِلنَّاسِ حُسْناً "

[" Worship ye none other than Allah and be kind and benevolent unto parents, the kindred, the orphans and the poor, and treat people with kindness." (*Baidawy's Commentary.*)]

" وَاعْبُدُوا اللهَ وَلَا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئاً وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ اِحْسَاناً وَبِذِى الْقُرْبَى وَالْيَتَامَى وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَالْجَارِ ذِى الْقُرْبَى وَالْجَارِ الْجُنُبِ وَالصَّاحِبِ بِالْجَنْبِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ وَمَا مَلَكَتْ اَيْمَانُكُمْ اِنَّ اللهَ لَا يُحِبُّ مَنْ كَانَ مُخْتَالاً فَخُوراً "

["And serve Allah and do not associate anything with Him and be good to the parents and to the near of kin and the needy and the neighbour of your kin and the alien neighbour (stranger) and the companion on your journey and the wayfarer and those whom your right hands possess. Surely Allah does not love him who is proud, boastful."]

It first of all enjoined the worship of one God for He is the source of all good; then it ordained benevolence towards the parents on account of their love for and favours to you; then the kindred on account of their relationship, and according to their proper degree of kinship ; then the orphans who have lost their provider and found nowhere to turn to; then the poor and needy; and lastly kindly treatment to all others.

Islam insisted on the kindly treatment of the neighbour so much so that the Prophet Muhammad saith in this connection :

" مَا زَالَ جِبْرِيلُ يُوصِينِي بِالْجَارِ حَتَّى ظَنَنْتُ أَنَّهُ سَيُوَرِّثُهُ "

[" So often did Gabriel exhort me to kindly treatment of the neighbour, that I bethought he will give him the right even to inherit. " (*Tradition.*)]

It strongly urged doing good unto all people whether you happen to know them or not. Nay, it goes

further still and ordains the clearance of all harmful things from the path of people and considers such an act a sign of true belief.

Nor was the social side neglected in Islam. Good manners were insisted upon to such an extent that the eating of garlic and onions before going to a meeting or visiting a mosque was forbidden lest the susceptibilities of other people might not be offended. Nor is that all; bodily cleanliness and, on the occasions of meeting people, the use of perfume is recommended.

Islam ordained cleanliness. It prescribed, over and above the daily ablution, bathing one's self as an essential obligation particularly an Friday on account of the congregation that takes place on that day for prayer.

Not only has Islam urged upon cleanliness, as pointed out before, but it requested further to have oneself perfumed. In short, it recommended you to afford your breathren-in-Islam all possible pleasure and happiness and promised you the highest recompense therefor.

Islam united the believers with the strongest bond of brotherhood which Allah hath fostered between them and made them thereby one family despite the difference of their races and the distances that separate their countries :

" إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ "

[" Verily believers are but brethren."]

III

Islam so much enjoined love of one another that true belief was made conditional thereupon ; for thus saith the Tradition :

" لا تدخلوا الجنة حتى تؤمنوا و لا تؤمنوا حتى تحابوا "

[" Ye shall not enter Heaven until ye believe, and ye shall not believe until ye love one another."]

It ordained good counsel and made it to cover the whole religion as signified by the Tradition :

" الدين النصيحة "

[" Religion is good counsel."]

It enjoined the believers to refrain from inflicting harm on others and made such desistence the very essence of Islam for thus it saith :

" المسلم من سلم المسلمون من لسانه و يده "

[" A true Muslim is he who spareth his fellow-Muslims the evil of his hand and tongue." (*Tradition.*)]

It urged strongly upon faithfulness and benevolence and warned against the insiduousness of hypocrisy and deceit whose taints corrupt the souls and detract from virtue :

" إن الشرك (الرياء) أخفى فيكم من دبيب النمل في الليلة الظلماء "

[" Verily hypocrisy is more imperceptible in you than the crawling of ants in the darkest of nights." (*Tradition.*)]

It recognised the natural tendency of mankind to injustice and warned against it in the most vehement manner, for thus it saith :

" ما من أمير عشرة الا يجاء به يوم القيامة مغلولة يداه فلا يفكه الا العدل "

[" No prince is there who rules over butten people, but will be brought on the Day of Judgment with his hands chained together, and none will set him free save the justice he dispensed." (*Teadition.*)]

It insisted on maintaining Divine Justice, also benevolence, charity and compassion, and made this incumbent on all people so that no one escaped the responsibility ; for it most wisely saith in this connection :

" كلكم راع وكل راع مسئول عن رعيته "

[" Ye are all shepherds and ye are all responsible for your flocks." (*Tradition.*)]

Islam recognised the evil propensities of mankind and the ceaseless efforts on their part to satisfy their passions and desires, thus missing the good life and depriving themselves of blessedness and salvation.

It has transcended, in this repect, the knowledge of the greatest pedagogues that ever existed. It warned you against your own self as against your most inexorable enemy, for the wiles and guiles of the soul are the most pernicious and farthest removed from the sphere of consciousness. To succumb to temptation and to follow the precipitous path of passion will inevitably lead to deviation and perdition.

The Tradition has said in this connection :

" أَعْدَى عَدُوِّكَ نَفْسُكَ الَّتِي بَيْنَ جَنْبَيْكَ "

[" Thy most bitter enemy is thine own soul that lieth within thy breast."]

And

" إِنَّ النَّفْسَ لَأَمَّارَةٌ بِالسُّوءِ "

[" Verily the soul[1] inciteth to evil."]

Islam has recognised the influence exercised by passion over the minds of men, and has forcibly cautioned them against it. It has exposed the role it assumes in the direction of their souls and to what extent it holds sway over their hearts.

So great indeed is the influence of passion over men, that it was referred to in the Qur'an as a deity worshipped to the exclusion of Allah :

1. The soul is distinguished from the spirit. It may be called the self or the animal soul.

" أَفَرَأَيْتَ مَنِ اتَّخَذَ إِلٰهَهُ هَوَاهُ وَأَضَلَّهُ اللهُ عَلَى عِلْمٍ وَخَتَمَ عَلَى سَمْعِهِ وَقَلْبِهِ وَجَعَلَ عَلَى بَصَرِهِ غِشَاوَةً "

[" Hast thou not seen he who hath deviated from the right path and so eagerly followed his passion as to make a deity thereof, and Allah hath forsaken him knowing of his misguidance and corruption of his soul, and hath sealed up his ears and heart so that he hearkenth not to goodly exhortations and is heedless of the signs of Allah." (*Baidaway's Commentary.*)]

It warned against following the precipitous path of passion :

" وَلَا تَتَّبِعِ الْهَوَى فَيُضِلَّكَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللهِ "

[" Follow not the passion of thy soul lest it causeth thee to miss the signs of Allah with which He hath indicated the path of rectitude." (*Alucy's Commentary.*)]

And promised the righteous :

" وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوَى فَإِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَى "

[" He who hath feared his trial before his Lord on the Day of Judgment hath curbed the unlawful desires of his soul, and was heedless of

wordly gratifications, verily, Paradise shall be his abode." (*Alucy's Commentary.*)]

Islam found mankind groping in the darkness of superstitions and delusions and reached forth a helping hand unto them to save them from the dire influence of conceit as signified by the verse :

" اِنْ يَتَّبِعُونَ اِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَ اِنَّ الظَّنَّ لَا يُغْنِي مِنَ الْحَقِّ شَيْئًا "

[" The unbelievers follow but a mere illusion, a false conceit of their own ; but a mere illusion attaineth not unto any truth." (*Alucy's Commentary.*)]

Also :

" وَ اِنْ تُطِعْ اَكْثَرَ مَنْ فِي الْاَرْضِ يُضِلُّوكَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللهِ اِنْ يَتَّبِعُونَ اِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَ اِنْ هُمْ اِلَّا يَخْرُصُونَ "

[" If thou followest the counsels of the unbelievers or of the ignorant, they will lead you astray from the path of righteousness, for they counsel nought but evil and follow a mere conjecture, and utter only untruths." (*Baidawy's Commentary.*)]

It showed that the path of righteousness could not be approached by way of conjecture or falsehood and that it could only be found through sound and sane reflection. Hence the frequent repetition in the Qur'an of such verses as :

" انَّ فِی ذٰلکَ لَا یَةً لِقَوْمٍ یَعْقِلُونَ "

[" There is verily a sign in such and such a thing for a people who understand "]

and " انَّ فِی ذٰلکَ لَا یَةً لِقَوْمٍ یَتَفَکَّرُونَ "

[" There is verily a sign in such and such a thing for a people who reflect."]

It reproves others thus:

" أَوَ لَمْ یَتَفَکَّرُوا "

[" Have they not reflected ! "]

and " أَوَ لَمْ یَنْظُرُوا "

[" Have they not witnessed ! "]

and other like verses.

Islam recognised the value of time and that men are prone to waste it in vain discourse or futile pursuits. It warned against such waste and strongly urged us to make good use thereof. It described the blessed thus :

" وَالَّذِینَ هُمْ عَنِ اللَّغْوِ مُعْرِضُونَ "

[" Those who avoid vain discourse and futile pursuits and busy themselves with useful avocations." (*Alucy's Commentary.*)]

The Prophet said in this connection :

" إنَّ اللهَ يَكْرَهُ أَنْ يَرَى عَبْدَهُ فَارِغاً مِنْ عَمَلِ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ "

[" Verily Allah detesteth to see man unoccupied with a pursuit of this world or of the hereafter " (*Tradition*)]

also

" مِنْ حُسْنِ إِسْلَامِ الْمَرْءِ تَرْكُهُ مَا لَا يَعْنِيهِ "

[" It is of good Islam that one should severely let alone what doth not concern one." (*Tradition.*)]

In view of the inherent propensities of men, Islam recognised the advantages accruing from the enjoinment of good and the forbiddance of evil:

" لَتَأْمُرُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَلَتَنْهَوُنَّ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ أَوْ لَيُسَلِّطَنَّ اللهُ عَلَيْكُمْ شِرَارَكُمْ فَيَدْعُو خِيَارُكُمْ فَلَا يُسْتَجَابُ لَهُمْ "

[" Let ye enjoin the good and forbid the evil, or will the Lord send the wicked among you to perpetrate evil, then the righteous will pray for deliverance in vain." (*Tradition.*)]

It showed that disregard of such an injunction would inevitably result in the disruption and downfall of nations. It referred to a people who evoked,

through their sins, the wrath and damnation of the Lord thus:

" كَانُوا لَا يَتَنَاهَوْنَ عَنْ مُنْكَرٍ فَعَلُوهُ لَبِئْسَ مَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ "

["The unbelievers forbade not one another such sins as they have committed before. Detestable indeed were their wicked actions." (*Baidawy's Commentary.*)]

Another verse counsels:

" وَاتَّقُوا فِتْنَةً لَا تُصِيبَنَّ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْكُمْ خَاصَّةً "

["Fear ye a sin that will affect not only those who committed it but will affect you, one and all, in your entirety." (*Alucy's Commentary.*)]

The Prophet saith in this connection:

" إِذَا عُمِلَتْ الْخَطِيئَةُ فِي الْأَرْضِ كَانَ مَنْ شَهِدَهَا فَأَنْكَرَهَا كَمَنْ
غَابَ عَنْهَا وَمَنْ غَابَ عَنْهَا فَرَضِيَهَا كَانَ كَمَنْ شَهِدَهَا "

["If a sin be committed on earth, he who hath witnessed it and condemned it, will he be absolved of its sin; and he who hath not witnessed it and yet approved of it, will he be made a party thereto." (*Tradition.*)]

Another Tradition ordains:

" لتأمرن بالمعروف؛ و لتنهون عن المنكر ثم لتأخذن على يد الظالم؛ و لتأطرنه على الحق أطرا؛ و لتقسرنه على الحق قسرا؛ أو ليضربن الله قلوب بعضكم ببعض، ثم يلعنكم كما لعن بنى إسرائيل "

["Let ye enjoin the good and forbid the evil, prevent the iniquity of the unjust and force him back to the truth, lest hatred of one another be engenderd in your hearts and ye be accursed as were the sons of Israel." (*Tradition.*)]

Islam recognised the inherent love of life and the covetousness of material ends inborn in men, the hatred and the envy engendered in the hearts of the poor against the rich and the love of pelf and the cupidity of the latter. It, therefore, assigned a share of the wealth of the rich to the poor every year and prescribed its collection by force if need be.

Islam has furthermore urged the rich to charity so that enmity and hatred may be exterminated from the hearts of the poor and love and good-will substituted instead; also, that the rich may thus set themselves free from the vices of avarice and cupidity:

" و من يوق شح نفسه فأولئك هم المفلحون "

["Expend of what the Lord hath given unto you in the manner He ordaind and save yourselves from the greed of your souls that ye may prosper." (*Baidawy's Commentary.*)]

It urged to lend the needy and set a greater value thereon than on charity. By the forbiddance of all and any interest on loans, Islam has striven to strengthen the bonds of love and implant kindness and benevolence in the hearts of men.

It is deplorable, indeed, to see how far mankind have, to their detriment, disregarded the dictates of virtue. The reforms clamoured for by extremists in many Christian countries are not, indeed, without justification. Evil institutions are undermining the very edifice of society in those countries and a complete collapse is only averted through constantly grappling with the exigencies of the moment. But did they only give the question of religion their serious consideration, they would find in Islam and its benign teachings a perfect panacea for all their social evils.

Islam recognised the worldly needs of man and his tendency to covet material ends as a means to his welfare. It pointed out that therein lies the cause of his wretchedness and soul-ruin and ordained:

"مَنْ طَلَبَ الدُّنْيَا حَلَالًا فِي عَفَافٍ كَانَ فِي دَرَجَةِ الشُّهَدَاءِ"

["Whoso seeketh the world within the bounds of the lawful and according to the dictates of virtue, will be reckoned in the same category as the martyrs." (*Tradition.*)]

It urged to righteousness and pointed out the signs of the righteous, yet it recognised the tendency of the soul to succumb to the forbidden and ordained the most effectual remedy to counteract this tendency :

" اتق الله حيثما كنت و اتبع السيئة الحسنة تمحها و خالق الناس بخلق حسن "

["Fear Allah wherever you may be and cause the good deed to follow the evil so that it may be expiated thereby, and treat people in a kindly way " (*Tradition*)]

and

" لا يبلغ الرجل درجة المتقين حتى يدع ما لا بأس به مخافة ما به بأس "

[" Man will not attain to the exalted position of the pious until he refrain from the mere permissible lest he be tempted by it to lapse unto the forbidden." (*Tradition.*)]

It recognised that souls are susceptible to take offence at the least thing and that hatred and malice may be borne even against a well-meaning offender. It has therefore urged to peace making and reconcilia-

tion among people and made such an act one of the best a man could do :

" لا خير في كثير من نجواهم الا من أمر بصدقة أو معروف أو اصلاح بين الناس ومن يفعل ذلك ابتغاء مرضاة الله فسوف نؤتيه أجرا عظيما "

["Vain are their deeds except those who enjoin charity, do good and make peace between men. Whosoever doth that to please the Lord, will the Lord recompense beyond all measure." (*Alucy's Commentary.*)]

It recognised that human souls are prone to revenge and are not content, in the exercise of justice, with mere retribution. The offender might, out of pity, be forgiven on the grounds of ignorance or the overwhelming motive which impelled him to commit what he has committed. Forgiveness will, in such a case, be more compatible with mercy and farther removed from injustice and iniquity.

Islam has, therefore, repeatedly urged to forgiveness for thus it saith :

" خذ العفو وأمر بالعرف وأعرض عن الجاهلين "

["Use indulgence with sinners and forgive their transgression, and enjoin good deeds and return not the evil of the ignorant with a like evil." (*Alucy's Commentary.*)].

Also :

" وجزاء سيئة سيئة مثلها فمن عفا وأصلح فأجره على الله "

["The recompense of evil is a like evil, but he who forgiveth the offender and reconcileth himself to his enemy and overlooketh the harm done him, will the Lord afford ample recompense." (*Alucy's Commentary.*)]

It describes the righteous thus, as :

" والكاظمين الغيظ والعافين عن الناس "

["Those who suppress anger and give no vent thereto, and forego the punishment of offenders." (*Baidawy's Commentary.*)]

Islam recognised the eagerness with which men seek the fleeting world and the sad regret with which they view the lost opportunities to secure material ends. They assign causes to their failure to avail themselves of those opportunities, but they progress no further in the direction of real knowledge and remain ignorant of the underlying causes which transcend all human knowledge or comprehension and whose minute workings are ordained from on high.

The following verse is significant in this connection :

" ما أصاب من مصيبة في الأرض ولا في أنفسكم إلا في كتاب من قبل أن نبرأها إن ذلك على الله يسير "

[" No misfortune is there, that afflicteth the earth as dearth, sterility, blighted crops or earthquakes ; or that afflicteth your persons as disease, plague, wound or injury, but ere Allah caused, it, was known to Him and recorded in the Book of Divine Decrees ; for such is easy unto the Lord." (*Alucy's Commentary.*)]

Islam has strongly urged justice—in which is comprised the restraint imposed on the self to keep within certain assigned limits. It enjoined all virtues and forbade all vices for thus it saith :

" إِنَّ اللهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَاءِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ "

["Verily Allah enjoineth justice, the doing of good and the giving to the kindred that of which they stand in need ; and forbiddeth the following of lustful desires, evil and oppression." (*Baidawy's Commentary.*)]

IV

Islam directed mankind to the path of goodliness and pointed out the worldly advantages accruing therefrom, as exemplified by the Tradition :

" مَنْ وَصَلَ رَحِمَهُ زِيدَ لَهُ فِي عُمْرِهِ وَوُسِّعَ عَلَيْهِ فِي رِزْقِهِ "

["Whoso giveth unto his kindred, will his life be blest and his prosperity augmented." (*Tradition.*)]

One of the most excellent tenets enjoined by Islam is to feel, in the performance of worship, entire submission to the sublime majesty of Allah and to be filled with complete awe and veneration for His grandeur and glory, as such will act as a deterrent against committing sin and cause the soul to revert to its original purity. It also impresses upon you that you have a spiritual entity apart from your worldly one, and that you should not seek the world eagerly to the exclusion of all else, as by so doing you will engage in protracted contention with people and will only earn their hatred and animosity.

The material world should have as little fascination as possible for you and should exercise no more than a passing influence over your heart; for only thus will you know happiness and content and enjoy the love and good-will of people.

It would take a very long discourse indeed, should we continue to discuss all the moral and material features which Islam embraces. We may, however, later recount some of the excellent features of prayer and the other rites of Islam. Suffice it to say that ablution is now admitted by all people to be beneficial for many diseases particularly those of the nose. The thrice rinsing of the mouth and the constant use of the tooth brush requisite for the health and good care

of the teeth and the sweetening of the breath were strongly insisted upon, particularly after sleep; so much so that the Prophet well-nigh made of them a religious injunction.

No less healthy and clean is the practice of frequently washing the feet ; this, moreover, prevents any odour emanating therefrom which would be the case should they be left for a long period without being washed.

As such and other features of Islam have become known to the world, many have taken up the cudgels for Islam because of their complete satisfaction and admiration thereof, being convinced that true Islam utterly repudiates many of the obnoxious practices of the so-called Muslims of today.

Were it only for those radical reforms alone, which were introduced within a short period after the advent of Islam, and the reasons for which non-Muslims failed to discover for centuries after, Islam should be accorded the highest honours by the just and discerning critic.

It should be remembered that this field of discussion is far too wide to be covered in detail with any tolerable measure of success ; I can only express very little of what I feel, which in turn is but a shadow of those comprehensive and all-pervading teachings of Islam.

The Qur'an says :

” قُلْ لَئِنِ اجْتَمَعَتِ الْإِنْسُ وَالْجِنُّ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَأْتُوا بِمِثْلِ هَٰذَا الْقُرْآنِ لَا يَأْتُونَ بِمِثْلِهِ وَلَوْ كَانَ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ ظَهِيرًا “

["Were men and Djinn assemble to produce something equal to the Qur'an in eloquence, rhythm and superb meaning, they could not, under any circumstance, produce anything like it. Nay but they could not do it even though they cooperate together for the purpose and support one another as they may." (*Alucy's Commentary.*)]

Surely the sense of justice and fairplay will have moved you by now to appreciate this saying of the Prophet of Islam :

” بُعِثْتُ لِأُتَمِّمَ مَكَارِمَ الْأَخْلَاقِ “

["I am sent unto mankind to perfect noble conduct"; (*Tradition*)]

as well as the Lord's saying in reference to the Qur'an :

” وَإِنَّهُ لَكِتَابٌ عَزِيزٌ لَا يَأْتِيهِ الْبَاطِلُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَلَا مِنْ خَلْفِهِ تَنْزِيلٌ مِنْ حَكِيمٍ حَمِيدٍ “

["It is an incomparable Book which yields to no abrogation or distortion and into which no falsehood could find a way from whatever side. It is a missive from the Wise Lord to

Whom all praise is due for the bounties He has bestowed upon mankind." (*Baidawy's Commentary.*)]

*
* *

We will now proceed to consider some of the injunctions of Islam.

Islam requires you to be self-respecting enough not to degrade yourself by imitation of the beasts below you; to be great enough not to be a slave to your passion and desires; and to be dignified enough not to glorify anyone save your Lord.

Islam enjoins you to seek the pleasure of Allah and His approval of all that is pure and righteous of your actions, so that you may become the viceregent of your Lord and acknowledge no favours except those bestowed by Him.

It requires you to feel that you are an active and beneficent member of society who disdains to imitate or to be dependent on others or to be outrivalled by them in any virtue.

It enjoins you to seek exaltation through Allah and humility unto Him. It requires you to use your mind and powers in whatever useful avocation that has fallen to your lot, and to fear none save Allah as long as you practise what He has ordained.

Islam enjoins the belief in monotheism for which the reason can accept no other substitute and without which the hearts of men will find no comfort or peace.

All are humble unto Allah,—mere subordinate creatures ; and the most favoured by Him are the righteous who obey His commandments.

The creed ordained by Islam has thus rendered man great and self-respecting and caused his heart to feel pride and exaltation. Small wonder it should be so when man realises that such attributes as greatness, majesty and grandeur could only pertain to the one, omnipotent and all-pervading Lord, and that all are mere subordinate creatures seeking His favour.

One of the great injunctions of Islam is to screen the failings of your fellow-Muslims and to keep away from places of suspicion lest others be tempted to evil thought and to slander.

Islam requires you to do favours unto your fellow-Muslims even by mere mediation or commendation.

Another commandment of Islam is to hasten to greet and shake hands with any Muslim so that the credit of a good act will be yours.

Another commandment is to defend your friend in his absence and to protect, by word and deed, his honour and property.

Yet another commandment is to commiserate with your fellow-Muslims in their afflictions ; to call on

their sick, attend their funerals, visit their graves and offer prayers for the salvation of their souls.

Islam enjoins justice unto all people and to wish for them the same as you wish for your own self—exaltation, security, health, good reputation and prosperity.

It ordains prayers in gratitude and thankfulness to the Beneficent Bestower, fasting which leads to the elevation of mind and to the purification of soul, and almsgiving which constitutes the allotment to the poor of one-fortieth (or two and half per cent) of the capital per year, in gaining Allah's favour and people's affection.

Nor are the other forms of charity left out in Islam. The giving unto the kindred of that which they stand in need, benevolence unto parents and help unto the poor are all equally ordained. Briefly, Islam enjoins good manners and noble conduct and so to labour in this world that you may attain happiness in the hereafter.

It is for this reason that Islam enjoins us to resist our own inclinations so that we may be of the elect abiding in the Kingdom of Heaven and that we may attain blessedness in this world and in the hereafter. It points out that our worst enemies are falsehood, misguidance, injustice, oppression and dissoluteness in any form they may assume, not only in others but even in our own selves.

Islam enjoins mercy and benevolence unto mankind and kindly treatment of them ; to seek their benefit and to afford them opportunities of gain and prosperity ; and above all to ward off any evil befalling them.

In short, it enjoined kindness, charity, faithfulness, kindly treatment of the neighbour, wayfarer, and guest and, lastly, kindness to animals.

Nor was the acquirement of knowledge left out of Islam. It ordained that man should acquaint himself with a measure of knowledge requisite for the amendment of beliefs, manners and conduct and the amelioration of life's conditions.

It enjoins righteousness which constitutes the refraining from any harmful act prejudicing one's chances in this world or in the hereafter, loyalty and fidelity in the cause of Allah and the faithful performance of worship for as the Tradition says :

" أُعْبُدِ اللهَ كَأَنَّكَ تَرَاهُ فَإِنْ لَمْ تَكُنْ تَرَاهُ فَإِنَّهُ يَرَاكَ "

[" Worship Allah as if you behold Him, for if you do not behold Him, He beholdeth you."]

It enjoins good counsel to mankind and the practice of patience and the resignation to the will of Allah.

It enjoins propriety of conduct, forbearance and satisfaction in the doing of good, as well as liberality, magnanimity, courage, zeal and manliness.

It enjoins prudence, judiciousness in judgment, thankfulness and fear of the Almighty and faith in and resignation unto Him. It further enjoins mercy to and compassion upon mankind, honesty and integrity, fulfilment of covenant and promise, perfect faith and yet to labour for one's living, toleration, hastening to the doing of good and also unwavering determination in upholding the tenets of the Religion. It enjoins love of Allah, the seeking of His favour, and reliance upon Him. Lastly, it enjoins to free the human soul from the dire influence of desire and to bring it to account for the wrongs perpetrated by it, thus purging it of all the defects and imperfections which defile it.

The Prophet Muhammad

I

”وَرَحْمَتِي وَسِعَتْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ فَسَأَكْتُبُهَا لِلَّذِينَ يَتَّقُونَ وَيُؤْتُونَ
الزَّكَاةَ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ بِآيَاتِنَا يُؤْمِنُونَ . الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الرَّسُولَ النَّبِيَّ
الْأُمِّيَّ الَّذِي يَجِدُونَهُ مَكْتُوبًا عِنْدَهُمْ فِي التَّوْرَاةِ وَالْإِنْجِيلِ يَأْمُرُهُمْ
بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَاهُمْ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُحِلُّ لَهُمُ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَيُحَرِّمُ عَلَيْهِمُ
الْخَبَائِثَ وَيَضَعُ عَنْهُمْ إِصْرَهُمْ وَالْأَغْلَالَ الَّتِي كَانَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ فَالَّذِينَ
آمَنُوا بِهِ وَعَزَّرُوهُ وَنَصَرُوهُ وَاتَّبَعُوا النُّورَ الَّذِي أُنْزِلَ مَعَهُ أُولَٰئِكَ
هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ“

[“His Mercy encompasseth everything—even the evildoers : for is it not of His Mercy that He chastiseth them that they may be aware of their evildoing ?

“ Yet most is His Mercy poured down upon those who refrain from sin and disbelief, those who give the ordained alms out of their wealth, and those who implicitly believe in all His Divine communications.

"Most chiefly are they so blessed who follow the Apostle sent by Allah to make known His communications, the illiterate Prophet whose name and qualities are already set down in the Scriptures, the Torah and the Evangel: the Prophet who enjoineth true belief and all good, and forbiddeth all evil.

"The Prophet who maketh lawful unto them the things which are rightly enjoyed and forbiddeth those things which are distasteful: he who mitigated the rigours of their rituals and tempered the severe stringency of their injunctions.[1]

"As for those who believe in his mission and prophethood and reverred and supported him against his enemies, and followed the Qur'an revealed unto him, those will merit favour and prosperity." (*Alucy's Commentary.*)]

"رَبَّنَا وَسِعْتَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ رَّحْمَةً وَعِلْمًا فَاغْفِرْ لِلَّذِينَ تَابُوا وَاتَّبَعُوا سَبِيلَكَ وَقِهِمْ عَذَابَ الْجَحِيمِ"

["O Lord, Thy mercy and knowledge are unbounded, they embrace everything. Forgive Thou those of whom Thou knowest true penitence and repentance and abandonment

1. While this verse has a general application, it particularly referred to the Jews with their rigorous rituals and stringent injunctions.

of sin : those who have followed the ordained path of righteousness ; save them from the severe torment of Hell." (*Alucy's Commentary*.)]

The truth and authenticity of the prophethood of Muhammad could be easily proven by citing his many miracles which, though they may be singly open to criticism, could not possibly be gainsaid collectively.

To be sceptic would make it very difficult indeed to believe the records of any past king or prophet or any historical event. History then would be rendered unreliable and laws and conventions thrown into utter confusion.

The authenticity of Muhammad's prophethood is too consistently corroborated by the traditions of successive generations to admit of any falsehood or untruth. It would have been impossible for all those millions of people from East and West to concur as they did, on such a question, despite the difference of their races and the vast distances which separate their countries.

Regarding his miracles, it is unnecessary to detail them specifically, for it is unanimously admitted that Muhammad was the medium for certain miracles to take place.

It should be borne in mind that many of these miracles were cited by trustworthy and impartial

chroniclers related by others whose accuracy and integrity are beyond question.

It would be quite sufficient for such an event to be cited from any one absolutely reliable and authentic source, for it to be incumbent on us to accept it : but here we have not one but many consistent irrefutable corroborations.

If we doubt the authenticity of Muhammad's prophethood, then how can we establish the prophethood of Moses or Jesus or the other Prophets—lacking, as they did, that consistent corroboration which was the lot of Muhammad ?

If the Christians, out of scepticism, will not accept the historical corroboration of the prophethood of Muhammad, how can they blame the Jews for being sceptic of the prophethood of Jesus—which, yet, Muslims accept ?

It is always detrimental to let the forces of scepticism run riot in the mind, for this will not lead to truth.

As a result of such sceptical conjectures, the atheists deny the existence of Allah. Allah Who is the very source of existence—Whose existence is the most obvious of all facts and without whom nothing has a reasonable existence !

Others have doubt even in perceptible objects and declare that they do not denote knowledge of the

object, as perception is often liable to err. They cite such errors of perception as may be witnessed in the apparent rushing past of the landscape while in a train or the apparent magnitude of a single grape seen through water.

Others absolutely deny the existence of all objects and declare that objects are not real, but merely subjective.

Yet another school, the agnostics, were so hopelessly steeped in scepticism that they completely lost their way and had to confess their failure to comprehend the reality of things.

You will find through the study of the different doctrines and opinions expounded by the different schools of thought that the controversy raged fiercely regarding knowledge, which is known in itself and by means of which other things are known.

But as assumption and speculation found their way into knowledge, scepticism began to show itself in the doctrines of their exponents and the door was thus flung wide open for all sorts of unfounded conjecture.

Contradictory opinions are held by opposing schools. Some declare knowledge to be axiomatic and requiring no definition. Others declare that it is indefinable owing to the intrinsic difficulty involved

in comprehending its reality, while others declare that it is, *per se*, the known thing—for knowledge of fire is fire itself and knowledge of water is water itself. When, however, knowledge is conceived by the mind, it assumes another form and would become subject to different rules. Another raging controversy is that regarding existence and the existing object, and many other such hypotheses which are the outcome of mere conjecture nurtured by speculation and scepticism.

It is tragi-comical indeed to see such divergence of opinion. It seems to rob the mind of its inherent faculty and the human nature of its initial clearness and purity.

A philosopher has rightly remarked in this connection that "Scepticism is responsible for the demoralisation of many a good man" —and as such he will lack that uncontaminated instinct and that clear judgment to which he may turn for judicious decisions.

Suppose, for the sake of argument, that someone declares that he gives little or no credence to all news and he regards it as positively unreliable on the grounds that it is possible that his informant may be telling a lie, or that he may have believed something contrary to what actually had taken place, or that he may have, inadvertently, told something else or that he may have, in speaking figuratively, told something other than the truth. In view of all these

contingencies which the mind admits as liable but not certain to occur, there then could be, indeed, no confidence or trust in anything whatsoever.

Should he declare that he has no faith in any of the established principles such as those of grammar, etymology, declension and the like on the grounds that those who compiled them from the original authors are only a few persons who are liable to error and forgetfulness, he will go on applying the same argument to every statement of these writers and to every opinion of the exponents thereof.

What answer can be given to such sophistry ? And what argmuent can be advanced ? Can one hope from guidance or expect the reform of one who argues thus ?

Would it not be very hard to convince him— though you are absolutely sure that his assumptions are utterly unfounded ?

It is significant in this connection to quote the Quranic verse in reference to such people :

" وَلَوْ فَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ بَاباً مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَظَلُّوا فِيهِ يَعْرُجُونَ لَقَالُوا

إِنَّمَا سُكِّرَتْ أَبْصَارُنَا بَلْ نَحْنُ قَوْمٌ مَسْحُورُونَ "

[" Were We to throw open above them a gateway unto Heaven through which they mount to behold its marvels, they would still declare out of sheer obstinacy and scepticism, that

their sights were obstructed from beholding the real and that what they saw was a mere vision. Nay that they were even bewitched at the time." (*Baidawy's Commentary.*)]

The Lord explained that they feigned to rebut that marvel which they have witnessed on the ground of the likelihood of defective sight or bewitched minds.

It would seem as if some of God's creatures lack the faculty of belief and can never be made to believe, despite all your endeavours.

Futile indeed is your endeavour, for it is as if you were expecting the deaf to hear the sound of cannon, or the blind to behold the brilliance of the radiant sun!

Small wonder, therefore, that they are bound to remain in doubt and disbelief and that the Lord saith concerning them :

" وَلَوْ أَنَّنَا نَزَّلْنَا إِلَيْهِمُ الْمَلَائِكَةَ وَكَلَّمَهُمُ الْمَوْتَى وَحَشَرْنَا
عَلَيْهِمْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ قُبُلًا مَا كَانُوا لِيُؤْمِنُوا "

[" Were We to send down the Angels to announce unto them the truth of the apostles, were We to quicken the dead to bear witness thereto and were We to cause all things to confront them face to face and testify to such truth, they still would not believe." (*Ibn Kathier's Commentary.*)]

" وَإِنْ يَرَوْا كُلَّ آيَةٍ لَا يُؤْمِنُوا بِهَا وَإِنْ يَرَوْا سَبِيلَ الرُّشْدِ لَا
يَتَّخِذُوهُ سَبِيلًا وَإِنْ يَرَوْا سَبِيلَ الْغَيِّ يَتَّخِذُوهُ سَبِيلًا "

[" Even if they hear the revelations recited or see the miracles performed, they would not, out of obstinacy, believe therein; and if they see the path of truth and righteousness, they would not take it; and if they see the path of error and misguidance, they would choose to take it for the satisfaction of their passions." (*Alucy's Commentary.*)]

So much then for those hopeless few; to resume our main discussion, we would like to point out that it would have been easy to prove many of Muhammad's miracles which were established beyond all doubts through authentic successive corroboration of facts pertaining thereto and to dispel all suspicions, and banish all doubts regarding the truth of his mission. But we decline to enter into such lengthy discussion and prefer to choose a shortcut leading thereto; and thus in making our appeal to your mind and reason, we are only meeting the demands of the present era which is definitely one of reason and research.

A thorough analysis of the precepts of Islam and a careful consideration of that pure heart, through which flowed those divine waters of wisdom and salvation, will leave no room for doubt in the minds of inquirers regarding the truth of Muhammad's

prophethood. For whosoever contemplates the fortitude of Muhammad in the times of trials and tribulations and the toleration with which he suffered all kinds of insults and persecutions, will scarcely doubt his honesty and his conviction in the truth of his mission.

Should you study his life you must inevitably come to the conclusion that Muhammad was distinguished by such noble conduct and unimpeachable character that he was called "The Trustworthy" long before his prophetic mission; that his own people had never imputed to him a single lapse from virtue or a vile action despite the fact that he never ceased disparaging their mentalities and fearlessly reviling their so-called gods; you must realise that such a man could never be an impostor.

A man like Muhammad could not possibly lie—he who proclaimed the greatness of God in such an unprecedented manner and relentlessly strove against those who imputed falsehood unto Him.

Again had he been an impostor, he could not, try as he might, have helped lapsing into confusion and contradiction and would have thereby been exposed to ridicule and disgrace.

He could never have been the source of perfection or the guide unto goodness and righteousness that he s wa

The position of Christians in denying the prophethood of Muhammad is identical with that of the Jews in denying the prophethood of Jesus. Why then should the Christians attack the Jews when they themselves are guilty of an identical sin.

Imagine ! Islam spread to the furthest corners of the globe in less than a single century ! Imagine it ! Imagine the mighty Truth that was in it that caused its revelation to spread like a flame across the world ! The eagerness with which it was welcomed, the support it received, and the faith and devotion it inspired must surely suggest, even to the most prejudiced, that here was—and is—a religion coming direct from the Lord of all : for, when in the history of the world do we find any religion that spread to the four corners of the earth in such a short period !

The zeal and self-sacrifice shown by Muhammad in the guidance of mankind constitute an irrefutable proof of his belief in the truth of that Divine Reality which filled his heart and soul ; so much so that the Lord addressed him thus :

" فَلَعَلَّكَ بَاخِعٌ نَفْسَكَ عَلَىٰ آثَارِهِمْ إِنْ لَمْ يُؤْمِنُوا بِهَٰذَا الْحَدِيثِ أَسَفًا "

[" Grieve thou not too much over the unbelievers who believed not in the Qur'an, for haply thou mayest kill thyself out of grief over them." (*Alucy's Commentary*.)]

So great indeed was his faith, that all threats and persecutions affected him not. It seems beyond human endurance to have suffered unflinchingly what Muhammad suffered in the course of announcing his divine message. Yet Muhammad, a mere man, supprised with divine fire as he was, bore all.

The most cursory persual of his early history would suffice to convince the reader of his integrity and of his belief in the truth of his mission.

It would not be irrelevant to mention in this connection that once, when preaching to the people of Al-Taif to call them unto the Lord, Muhammad was so roughly handled and maltreated that he bled profusely, yet in the midst of his afflictions he turned to God in earnest prayer, " O Lord, I appeal to Thee out of my weakness, my lack of resourcefulness and in complaint of the contempt and abuse of men. Yet if I but merit Thy favour, verily naught care I."

Cannot such a magnificent display of faith and fortitude be considered ample evidence of the truth of his mission ?

An impartial, broadminded inquirer with a fair sense of justice, who analyses the character of Muhammad and puts his actions beneath the searching light of criticism, will readily recognise the divinity of his mission and be convinced of his integrity and truthfulness.

The signs of the truth-teller as well as that of the impostor show, not only in their actions and utterances, but also in their very gestures. A discerning critic or a psychologist cannot mistake these signs, for indeed the states of man's mind and conscience are shown in his face, though little or nothing thereof can be detected in word or deed. Of such the Lord hath said :

" فلعرفتهم بسيماهم و لتعرفنهم فى لحن القول "

[" Thou shalt surely recognise the hypocrites by the peculiar signs whereby the Lord hath marked them and by their erroneous perversion of words." (*Baidawy's Commentary.*)]

II

As already pointed out, Muhammad was wholly given to the meditation of the Glorified. Allah was all in all to him and the awe and reverence due unto the Lord seemed to run through his very veins.

Like all other Prophets and Apostles, he used to attribute everything to the Lord. Should any good come his way, he was wont to say, "Praise be to Allah by Whose grace our blessings are rendered complete." And should a misfortune befall him, he would say, "Praise be to Allah in prosperity and adversity."

Should he contemplate an action, he would solicit Allah's aid saying, "O Lord, grant me the good and

guide me unto what is right"; and should he set out on a journey he would pray unto Him, "O Lord, of Thee do I ask strength and seek support."

On going to sleep, he was wont to say, "In the care of Thy Name do I lay me to rest"; and on rising, "Praise be to Allah Who quickeneth us after death and unto Him shall we return."

On putting on a new garment, he would say, "Praise be to Allah Who gave me the wherewithal to adorn myself in life."

When he ate, he used to say, "Praise be to Allah Who hath provided us with food and by Whose pleasure we are Muslims"; and when he drank, "Praise be to the Lord Whose infinite mercy maketh water to be fresh and sweet—not salt and bitter because of our sins."

When he broke his fast, he was wont to say, "Praise be to Allah Who hath aided me to fast and Who hath given me to eat."

On turning in bed during the night, he would say "There is no God but Allah, the One, the All-Mighty, Lord of the Heavens and the Earth and what lieth betwixt them, the All-Mighty, the Ever-Forgiving."

Should he wake up during the night, he would say, "O Lord forgive us our trespasses, grant us Thy mercy and guide us unto the right path."

Should he feel apprehension of certain people, he was wont to say, "O Lord ! Be Thou our weapon to pierce them, our shield against them, and our refuge from their evils."

When he would come out of his house, he would say, "In the Name of Allah do I depend for there is no power nor might save in Him; and I seek refuge in Him from misguidance, error and oppression or being lead by others thereto."

When beholding the new moon he would say, "May it be an auspicious augury of guidance and good unto my people ; I extol Allah Who created you ! "

Should he raise his eyes towards the heavens he would say, "O Thou Director of Hearts ! Make firm my heart in Thy obedience ; " and if he had occasion to swear by the Lord he would say, "By Him in Whose hands lieth the soul of Muhammad."

If the wind blew he would say, "O Lord, grant us the good it bringeth and preserve us from the evil thereof."

Such was Muhammad in all his actions, completely given to the thought of Allah and ever seeking His aid and support in whatever project he might set out to do. No might or power, indeed, did he ever attribute to himself or others where Allah and His cause were concerned ; he reposed his faith in Allah to the exclusion of all others and thus was wont

to say, "Sufficient unto me is the Creator apart from the created, the Provider apart from the provided for ; sufficient unto me is He Who sufficeth me ; sufficient is Allah unto me for He is the Most Excellent Sufficiency."

To resume our analysis. Would not the prophecies of future events which abound in the Qur'an constitute a mighty evidence of the truth and authenticity of Muhammad's prophethood ? The following verses would serve as an example :

" سيهزم الجمع و يولون الدبر "

["The host of unbelievers shall be utterly routed and shall take to disordered flight."[1] (*Alucy's Commentary.*)]

" غلبت الروم فى أدنى الأرض وهم من بعد غلبهم سيغلبون "

["The Romans have been defeated by the Persians in a near land : and after their defeat, they shall overcome their foes."

(The unbelievers of Mecca rejoiced at the victory, as the Persians were unbelievers like themselves and the Greeks were followers of the Scriptures like the Muslims. The verse was thus revealed foretelling a victory of the Romans over the Persians which was fulfilled a few years later.[2]–(*Baidawy's Commentary.*)]

" لتدخلن المسجد الحرام ان شاء الله آمنين "

1. Referring to the Battle of Badr.
2. Vide footnote page 22.

["Ye shall enter the Sacred Mosque, if Allah pleases, in full security."

(The Muslims were promised to enter Mecca in full security and the verse was revealed to the effect that they would enter the Sacred Mosque in Mecca, which entry was materialised soon after. (*Alucy's Commentary.*)]

وَعَدَ اللّٰهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي
الْأَرْضِ كَمَا اسْتَخْلَفَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ وَلَيُمَكِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ دِينَهُمُ الَّذِي
ارْتَضَىٰ لَهُمْ "

[" Allah hath promised the True Believers to exalt Islam and cause it to triumph over disbelief, and cause them to succeed the unbelievers and make them His viceregents on earth, as he caused the Israelites before to succeed the infidels; and that He would establish Islam which He has been pleased to give unto them." [1] (*Kashaf's Commentary.*)]

" لَنْ يَضُرُّوكُمْ إِلَّا أَذًى وَإِنْ يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ يُوَلُّوكُمُ الْأَدْبَارَ ثُمَّ
لَا يُنْصَرُونَ "

["The unbelievers shall inflict no grievious harm on you, nay, naught but slight injuries and threats and if they engage in battle against

1. In fulfilment of this promise, the Muslim conquests extended from China in the east to Morocco and the Atlantic in the west, a mighty evidence of the far-flung dominion and exaltation of Islam.

you, they will only be defeated and none would afford them victory over you." (*Baidawy's Commentary.*)]

" انّا نحن نزّلنا الذّكر و انّا له لحافظون "

["We have sent down the Qur'an whose revelation the unbelievers deny; and We will preserve it from distortion and corruption." (*Alucy's Commentary.*)]

" و اذ يعدكم الله احدى الطّائفتين أنّها لكم "

[" Allah hath promised you victory over the unbelievers and you aimed at the spoils and the avoidance of danger, but Allah willed to exalt His Religion and manifest the truth by giving you the promised victory over the host of the unbelievers."[1] (*Baidawy's Commentary.*)]

" اذا جآء نصر الله والفتح ورأيت النّاس يدخلون فى دين الله افواجا "

[" When the Lord shall cause thee to prevail over the unbelievers, and the people shall betake themselves in multitudes to the Religion of Allah."[2] (*Baidawy's Commentary.*)]

1. At the Battle of Badr the unbelievers were encamped in two parties, one a caravan under Abu-Sufian and guarded by only forty horsemen and the other was the mass of their fighting force under Abu-Jahl which latter was defeated by the Muslims in fulfilment of God's promise.

2 This took place in the ninth year of the Hejra when Mecca was reduced to submission and its inhabitants submitted to Islam as well as the people of Al-Taif, Yemen, Hawzan and other tribes who came willingly to Muhammad to profess the Faith.

All these prophecies and many others were fulfilled, one by one, and their entire significance was fully unfolded to the world; otherwise the enemies of Islam would have gloated over its failure, and its followers would have forsaken it instead of multiplying in numbers as has been the case.

Furthermore, would not the detection of the innermost secrets and workings of souls, as testified in the following verses, bear ample evidence to the truth of Muhammad's prophethood?

" وَيَقُولُونَ فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ لَوْلَا يُعَذِّبُنَا اللَّهُ بِمَا نَقُولُ "

["The hypocrites who feigned belief would say amongst themselves, 'If Muhammad were a prophet would he not invoke the Lord to punish us because of our disbelief and hostility to him." [1] (*Alucy's Commentary.*)]

The faith of men in Muhammad would have, undoubtely, been shaken and they would have deserted him had it transpired that his knowledge of these hidden thoughts was unfounded and that such detection was mere conjecture on his part.

It is incredible that Muhmmad should prejudice his chances of maintaining his cause by claiming

1. The Jews and hypocritical Muslims plotted secretly against Muhammad and derided him in their private discourse, although as this proves that this secret plotting was divinely revealed to Muhammad.

other than the truth for he would, consequently, have been exposed to utter disgrace.

Would not the fervent zeal, which he displayed in calling the people unto their salvation in this world and the hereafter, be considered a sign of perfection and nearness to the Almighty ?

So great, indeed, was his anxiety to guide the people unto the path of righteousness that the Lord addressed him thus :

" فلا تذهب نفسك عليهم حسرات "

["Spend thou not thyself out of sorrow and grief over the unbelievers and their persistence in disbelief." (*Baidawy's Commentary*.)]

His sole objective was to guide them unto a higher sphere of conduct and give them that great system of laws which raised the Arab nation from the abysmal depths of humiliation into which it had sunk, to the very zenith of might and glory.

He had, thereby, made them masters after being the abject creatures that they had been and rendered them, through those glorious teachings, the mightiest nation on earth after having absolutely been the most despicable of all.

Erudition and learning flourished, and many great philosophers and thinkers distinguished themselves and lead the world unto the untrodden paths of inquiry

and research. So thorough, indeed, was the treatment of their subjects that many of the scientific and philosophical theories of today still bear the unmistakable stamp of their particular systems of thought of which they were the world's pioneers.

"Christianity," remarks Draper,[1] the celebrated American scientist, "continued for one thousand years without the appearance of a single scientist or philosopher of any attainment while Islam could boast of thousands of distinguished men within a few years of its revelation."

Would such a soul which well nigh spent itself with anxiety for the salvation of others be capable of falsehood and deceit?

Would not his mercy and tolerance which he displayed at Ohod speak for themselves when with his face cut and eye-tooth broken he turns unto the Lord in earnest prayer, "O Lord, forgive my people, for they know not what they do."

Thus in the midst of his afflictions he would find an excuse for his people and pray for their forgiveness.

Such tolerance and magnanimity could only proceed from a complete disregard of the material world and an implicit faith in the Almighty and the divine reality of truth.

1. Draper, John William (1811-1882) American scientist, who wrote, among other treatises, *The History of the Conflict between Religion and Science* (1875).

Would not the spiritual light from Allah which filled him and enabled him to read with the feelings and inner workings of the human soul, all point to a supernatural attainment in the sphere of the unknown? But one wonders not at this for the Lord saith in this connection :

"أَلَا يَعْلَمُ مَنْ خَلَقَ وَهُوَ اللَّطِيفُ الْخَبِيرُ"

["Shall not Allah Who hath created all things know what men conceal or declare for His omniscience encompasseth all hidden or open thoughts." (*Baidawy's Commentary.*)]

Yet Muhammad was illiterate and had never travelled searching for knowledge nor held converse with any of the contemporary men of learning as is testified by history, for he was brought up an orphan among an ignorant people. Nor was trade such a vocation of his that he could be assumed to have come into contact, in the course of his journeys, with the sons of advanced nations such as those of Persia and Rome; moreover all other such assumptions lack the corroboration of history and tradition, for Muhammad had neither the means nor the desire for the material world that would induce him to take any trouble on that account.

Is it not a sign of the truth of his prophethood to have told of past people and remote generations, such events as were only known to the high priests of the Scriptures with whom he never came into contact—

such events as were most guardedly kept from even their most intimate adherents.

Muhammad had severely taxed them with the distortion of the Scriptures and the withholding of many truths contained therein, and yet he used to make known these truths as signified by the following verses:

" إِنَّ هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ يَقُصُّ عَلَى بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ أَكْثَرَ الَّذِي هُمْ فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ "

[" Verily this Qur'an declareth unto the Jews and Christians the truths of many points concerning which they are continually at variance."[1] (*Alucy's Commentary.*)]

يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولُنَا يُبَيِّنُ لَكُمْ كَثِيراً مِمَّا كُنْتُمْ تُخْفُونَ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ " -

[" O people of the Scriptures! An Apostle had come unto you making manifest much of what you have concealed of the Torah and the Evangel."[2] (*Alucy's Commentary.*)]

Yet another sign of the truth of Muhammad's prophethood is the giving in full detail, on being

1. Such points as they disagree upon are the conception of Jesus as a God or that he is the son of God or that he is one of a trinity or that he is a mere prophet like all other prophets, etc., etc.

2. Such as the description of Muhammad and the verse of stoning adulterers in the Law: and Christ's prophecy of Muhammad by the name of Ahmed in the Gospel.

questioned by the Jews, the stories of Zul-Karnein,[1] Moses, Jesus, the inmates of the Cave and Lokman and his son as well as that which had been forbidden and made lawful unto the Jews.

III

The attitude of Muhammad towards the Christians was just the same; yet, in no single instance, did a Christian or a Jew dare to deny his integrity and singleness of heart, despite the bitter hatred and animosity they harboured against him and their eagerness to refute his claims.

Did he not call upon the Christians at the behest of the Lord:

"تعالوا ندع ابناءنا و ابناءكم و نساءنا و نساءكم
وانفسنا و انفسكم ثم نبتهل فنجعل لعنة الله على الكاذبين"

["Let us call together our kinsfolk and your kinsfolk and make imprecations on those who lied concerning Christ."[2] (*Alucy's Commentary.*)]

But they declined to do so, knowing the truth, and their chief spokesman, Al-Akeb by name, said, "Ye have witnessed that the man is a Prophet and never did

1. A great prince of the pre-Christian era whose conquests extended far east and west. Commentators differ widely as to his proper identity but they all agree that he was a True Believer.

2. The Christians of Najran sent a deputation to dispute with Muhammad concerning Christ. They agreed to abide the trial mentioned in the verse but at the last moment their courage failed them.

a people enter into imprecation against a prophet of God but they were destroyed."

The solicitude which Muhammad had shown for the guidance of his people could only proceed from a soul completely devoid of personal ends and desires. Had this not been the case, he would necessarily have lapsed into contradiction and confusion in the pursuit of different ends and according to the ever-changing phases of circumstance.

The following verse is significant in this connection :

" وَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ غَيْرِ اللهِ لَوَجَدُوا فِيهِ اخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا "

["Had the Qur'an been a discourse of men as the unbelievers allege, they would not have failed to detect therein many incongruities and contradictions." (*Baidawy's Commentary*.)]

Would not his wide vision, comprehending as it did all spheres of human life, constitute another sign of the truth of his prophethood ? There was not a single concern of man to which he, through Divine Inspiration, did not prescribe the adequate means for the right conduct thereof. He pointed out the proper attitude in regard to Allah which leads to the elevation of man's mind and the salvation of his soul, acquainting him thereby with the finer and higher attributes that dwell within him. Nor was the treatment of

family or of people in general left out ; relations with them were so happily ordered to ensure a peaceful and contented life.

Would not the failure of the Arabs—who were the acclaimed masters of eloquence and oratory—to emulate the Qur'an constitute yet another sign of the truth of his prophethood ? They were intent on the refutation of his claims and the suppression of his influence ; but he continued to upbraid them and to challenge them to disprove his words :

" فَأْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ مِنْ مِثْلِهِ وَادْعُوا شُهَدَآءَكُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللهِ اِنْ
كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ فَاِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلُوا وَلَنْ تَفْعَلُوا فَاتَّقُوا النَّارَ الَّتِي وَقُودُهَا
النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ أُعِدَّتْ لِلْكَافِرِينَ "

["Produce a chapter like that of the Qur'an and summon all ye command of men and deities apart from Allah to help you in the attempt; but if ye fail to do it as ye are bound to, then fear ye Hell whose fuel shall be men and the hewn idols they worshipped, and which is made to receive those who disbelieved." (*Baidawy's Commentary.*)]

It should be observed that a prophecy is included in this verse foretelling the inevitability of their failure which was duly fulfilled. We have already alluded to the many prophecies foretold in the Qur'an ; a similar one is the prophecy concerning the Jews which runs :

" وَلَنْ يَتَمَنَّوْهُ أَبَدًا بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ "

[" But they shall never wish for death, on account of the sins they have committed."

(The Jews claimed that Paradise is exclusively assigned to them to the exclusion of all other people. In refutation of their claims, they were challenged to wish for death if they were so sure of going to Heaven, but they dared not wish for it, even perfunctorily, despite their eagerness to refute his claims. (*Baidawy's Commentary*.)]

* *

So much for this digression ; to resume the main subject, the failure of the Arabs to emulate the Qur'an was proof positive, against them as well as all others, of the Divine origin of the Qur'an—even as the healing of the blind and the leper by Jesus was considered a proof against medical practitioners, and the turning of his staff into a serpent by Moses a proof against magicians. Yet the successive corroboration sustained by authentic Muslim traditions and versions has never fallen to the lot of Moses, Jesus or any other prophet ; in fact such corroboration is completely lacking in their case and it was only through the Qur'an that their miracles were confirmed.

Should we consider fairly the Book revealed to Muhammad, we would readily recognise the Divine Source whence it issued. The reader who studies the Qur'an carefully would find that it enjoins no more than the worship of Allah, noble conduct and kindly treatment of men, thus leading to the path of salvation and to the urging to mercy and benevolence towards Allah's creatures. It maintains the unity and infallibility of Allah and points out the love and reverence due unto Him. It further enjoins to entertain no awe except of Him and to seek no refuge save in Him (for He considereth none of men's outward appearances but looketh deep into their hearts) in order that they may attain through faith and integrity, the highest of all virtues and the acme of perfection.

Had this Book been faked for some ulterior motive or other, we would have found it altogether different and it would have been a medley of confusion and contradictions instead of being the model of sublime wisdom and perfection that it is.

No wonder, therefore, that the Lord saith in this connection :

" قُلْ لَئِنِ اجْتَمَعَتِ الْإِنْسُ وَالْجِنُّ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَأْتُوا بِمِثْلِ هَٰذَا الْقُرْآنِ
لَا يَأْتُونَ بِمِثْلِهِ وَلَوْ كَانَ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ ظَهِيرًا "

[" Were men and Djinn assembled to produce
something equal to the Qur'an in eloquence,

rhyme and superb meaning, they could not, under any circumstance, produce anything like it. Nay but they could not do it even though they cooperate together for the purpose and support one another all they can." (*Alucy's Commentary*.)]

Could such an extraordinary utterance be made by a wavering impostor ? Impostors are known, the world over, to be a cowardly lot who feel apprehension on the least possible provocation.

What great faith and conviction must have filled that heart from whence issued at the Lord's behest this significant verse :

" أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ أَمْ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبٍ أَقْفَالُهَا "

[" Would the unbelievers not peruse the Qur'an and meditate upon its exhortations that, haply, they may avoid such sins as they have committed ; Nay but their hearts are so completely sealed against meditation that no word or truth could find a way thereunto." (*Alucy's Commentary*.)]

Much more could be written on this point, but we must present the case from other angles.

*
* *

On further consideration, it will be readily recognised that the elevation of the Arab people

from the lowest depths of ignorance to the highest attainments of knowledge, from servile humiliation to exaltation, the inculcation in them of a most efficient culture and noble conduct in every sphere of life, had so transformed them that every single individual of their nation had become a power in himself after having been akin to the beasts of prey. They had been guilty of oppression and infanticide, an atrocity from which even animals recoil. Yet in less than no time, they achieved distinction as the greatest statesmen and leaders of their time and the light that was theirs was, henceforth, shed all over the earth.

To those of sound judgment and clear insight, this proves beyond all doubt that the source of such a great Faith was the very incarnation of all good and perfection, for the virtues with which one person imbues others must, of necessity, be commensurate with his moral worth and attainments.

The object of all divine dispensations is but to deliver mankind from the pernicious evils that beset them and to implant noble conduct as well as the secret and open fear of God deep in their hearts : for this is the basis of all good and prosperity. The Prophet Muhammad is, in this respect, the greatest of all prophets and this in itself affords ample evidence of the truth of his prophethood for those who set a value on moral

proofs. As for others, we would refer them to the more tangible proofs and natural phenomena for these others fail to appreciate the fundamental truth on which rests the salvation of mankind and their elevation to the highest possible standard of moral and spiritual excellence.

They fail to comprehend the reality of things and lack those finer feelings which afford the souls the blessedness of the Kingdom of Heaven to which they aspire.

In no other wise could man achieve refinement in the material and spiritual spheres.

To those of deep insight and penetration, there could be no greater proof of truth than the actions of the claimant to prophethood, his spiritual and moral worth and his striving for the salvation and well-being of his people to render them foremost in Heaven as well as on earth.

Such was the state of the Muslim people at the time when they adhered strictly to their Faith and its tenets. It would, indeed, be impossible that such far-reaching and important results could be achieved without divine support. The hisory of the failure of philosophers and others who wielded earthly power fully bears out such a conclusion. Moreover, it should be remembered that Muhammad was brought up among the savage and ignorant tribes of the Arabs which fact constitutes a proof in itself.

It is not our intention to discuss in detail the characteristics and miracles of Muhammad. Nor is it our desire to dwell long on the fact that falsehood does not become such a perfect soul. "I have been sent to perfect the traits of noble conduct" was Muhammad's message unto mankind.

A great soul such as Muhammad's could hardly be prone to deceit, for deceit is a characteristic which has a most pernicious and detrimental effect on souls and is positively a sign of utter depravity and degradation.

It is an established fact that he who lacks something cannot but fail to give that thing, that the true character of a person will in course of time be revealed, whether he willed it or not, and that the soul of man will be laid bare not only through his words and actions but also through his very gestures.

It is recorded of some Arabs that on beholding the divine light of truth which radiated from Muhammad's face, they exclaimed: "Verily this is not the face of an impostor" and consequently believed in him.[1]

Suffice it to say in this connection that Muhammad was so noted for his noble conduct and unimpeachable character that the people of Qureish called him "The Faithful."

1. The same statement is recorded of Abdullah Ibn Sallam, a learned Jewish rabbi.

Moreover, it has never been the divine rule to give support to impostors claiming prophethood for that would be incompatible with the wisdom and justice of the Lord.

"There will come after me false prophets," saith Jesus Christ and on being asked what will their sign be, he answered, "Their sign will be that the Lord shall not support them."

The support extended by Allah to the Prophet Muhammad exceeds, by far, such as was rendered to any of the prophets before him. The great change which took place after his mission is unprecedented in the annals of anterior religions. Any one, who deems it possible that the Lord should support Muhammad and cause him to prevail when he was a lying impostor, would be guilty of gross ignorance of the proper attributes due to the Lord as well as of His Justice and Wisdom and of the divine laws governing His creatures.

Moreover a lying impostor could not hide his false attitude all his lifetime—particularly from his most intimate friends.

It would be impossible that such hypocrisy and deceit should remain unexposed for any length of time. Truth has a distinctive quality which vanity completely lacks, and deception is but a false mask which the lapse of time is bound to tear off some day.

This is more so in the case of someone who has a host of inexorable enemies as Muhammad had.

Yet the history of his companions, such as that of Abu-Bekr and Omar bears a glowing testimony to his integrity and moral perfection, for mutual harmony could be achieved only in proportion to the affinity that exists between kindred souls. Character is affected by character and is ultimately tinged with the peculiar traits thereof and this is particularly so in the case of master and disciples where deep and true affection exists.

Nor is that all; the material phenomena alone performed by Muhammad more than substantiate his claims. They were cited from the most reliable sources and never, in a single instance, lacked the corroboration of history or tradition. Had pertinacious cavillers been endowed with a sense of justice and were they seekers of truth alone, they would have, unhesitatingly, believed in the authenticity of the Qur'an which never failed to reiterate such versus as:

" الَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ يَعْرِفُونَهُ كَمَا يَعْرِفُونَ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ "

[" Those who were given the Scripture know Muhammad even as they know their own children, for his name and qualities were clearly given in their books." (*Baidawy's Commentary*.)]

And:

" يجدونه مكتوبا عندهم في التوراة والانجيل "

[" They will find his name and qualities clearly given in the Torah and Evangel." (*Alucy's Commentary.*)]

And:

" تعالوا ندع ابناءنا وابناءكم ونساءنا ونساءكم
وانفسنا وانفسكم ثم نبتهل فنجعل لعنة الله على الكاذبين "

[" Let us call together our kinsfolk and your kinsfolk and make imprecations on those who lied concerning Christ." (*Alucy's Commentary.*)]

As already alluded to in the beginning of this chapter, the Christians, who came to dispute with Muhammad, were dumbfounded and never as much as uttered a single word when they were challenged by him to make imprecations.

To the just and fairminded among them this was proof positive of the truth of Muhammad's prophethood and not a few of the eminent men and learned rabbis, such as Abdullah Ibn Sallam and Mocharich, believed in him.

It is incredible that such a man as Abdullah Ibn Sallam, one of the most learned rabbis who were

versed in the Law would have believed in Muhammad had he been an impostor. Nor would the Christians of Najran have ignominiously withdrawn from making imprecations after accusing him of falsehood and deceit.

Moreover, it is highly improbable that Muhammad, had he been an impostor, would address them in such a way and upbraid them with the fact that he is known to them "even as they know their own children."

Nor is it imaginable that he would dare, unsupported, to maintain such an assertion for it would have driven them away from him and made him an object of scorn and derision.

Had Muhammad not been a prophet as it is alleged, he was admitted by the unbelievers to have been the most prudent of men. He would have been most imprudent and ignorant had he claimed to be what he was not. His enemies would have found in him an easy prey, and the great edifice which he had succeeded in raising would have long ago toppled to the earth in ruins.

IV

To complete our subject, we summarise in the following pages a long discourse of Ibn Taimiyya's,

one of the most learned doctors of Islam in the seventh century of Hejra.

No one has honestly claimed prophethood but has displayed such signs as wisdom, truth, charity and other virtuous attributes which constitute a proof of his genuineness.

A prophet necessarily preaches and enjoins certain truths and tenets. He has moreover certain duties to perform. Not so an impostor, whose falsehood will be readily detected in whatever he does or says.

When two persons claim something, the one being true and the other false, the truth of the former and the lies of the latter are bound to be revealed in more than one way, for truth is requisite to righteousness and falsehood necessarily implies wickedness. The true is guided by inspirations from on High which urge him onward and lead him unto the right path. The light and the good example which he affords to mankind could never be attained by the impostor who is influenced by Satan.

Of such the Lord saith :

" هَلْ أُنَبِّئُكُمْ عَلَى مَنْ تَنَزَّلُ الشَّيَاطِينُ تَنَزَّلُ عَلَى كُلِّ أَفَّاكٍ أَثِيمٍ "

[" Shall I tell you on whom satans descend ? They descend on liars and wicked men " (*Baidawy's Commentary.*)]

It is shown that satans hold communion with the wicked. Soothsayers, who, even though they should

chance to predict some unknown event which proves to be true, are essentially wicked impostors whose pretensions will be exposed. They have no real claim to prophethood and what they reveal could not be the outcome of divine inspiration.

Those, however, who know the truthfulness, integrity and consistency in word and deed of the Prophet Muhammad, will realise, out of real conviction, that he was no soothsayer or impostor.

People can easily distinguish between the true and the false by means of the many indications manifested even among those who profess knowledge of arts and handicrafts. As the truth or falsehood of such people is easily discernible from many standpoints, so it is with him who proclaims, in word or deed, a faith of love, righteousness and truth; his genuineness or imposture is bound to be revealed sooner or later.

Prophethood implies certain knowledge and duties by means of which a prophet is known. Such knowledge and duties are the most noble of all accomplishments. It is incredible, therefore, that the true could be confounded with the false and that truth and imposture should remain undiscovered in face of such indications. It is particularly so when we remember that the world has never ceased to be influenced by some prophet or other from the time of Adam up to the present day.

Nor is mankind unaware of the kind of revelation proclaimed by the Prophets and Apostles of Allah, the influence of whom still prevails on earth, for men still retain some impressions of those Prophets by which they can recognise the verity of their claims and distinguish between prophet and impostor.

Assuming, therefore, .that someone came unto mankind, enjoining theocracy and idolatry and preaching wickedness, iniquity and disbelief in Allah and the Day of Judgment, would such a man be required to perform a miracle or expect to be believed ? And even granting that he happened to perform what appeared to be a miracle, it would only be a clever piece of illusion or some sort of charlatanism. In a word, the innermost of man's thoughts whether right or wrong, good or evil are bound to show on his face, through the slips of his tongue—nay, even in the very gestures he unconsciously makes.

It is of such people that the Lord addressed His Prophet thus :

"ولو نشاء لأريناكهم فلعرفتهم بسيماهم ولتعرفنهم في لحن القول"

["Should We please We would point the hypocrites out to thee, and thou shalt surely recognise them by the peculiar signs whereby We have marked them and by the erroneous perversion of their words." (*Baidawy's Commentary*)]

And if man's innermost thoughts could be detected

without being voiced, they would even be more amenable to be fully understood should they be accompanied with some actual expression thereof.

Again, if the truth or imposture of a speaker could be inferred from the circumstances, nay, even from the very slips of the tongue or twitchings of the face, then how could the truth or imposture of someone who claims prophethoood remain undiscovered? And how could the true remain undistinguished from the false in the face of such evidence.

Again, people know of their elders and fellow-beings, whose truth and veracity they have long tried, that they do not deliberately tell a lie. We do not deny that man is liable to change and become the intentional liar that he never was before. But when he does so, those who know him will not fail to perceive the change that has come over him.

It was because Khadija[1] knew Muhammad to be true and righteous, that she said to him when he betrayed fear on receiving the Revelation for the first time, "Nay, by Allah! Allah shall never put thee to shame, for thou givest unto the kindred, supportest the weak, dost lavish hospitality on the guest, renderest succour to the needy and relievest the misfortunes of the afflicted."

It is the Divine rule that those endowed with noble and unimpeachable conduct enjoy the favour and support of Allah.

1. First wife of the Prophet and his only wife for five and twenty years.

Should the one blessed with these attributes fulfil the other requirements of the prophets, he would be recognised as one of them, particularly if his advent was foretold and his distinctive qualities were known to men. Such knowledge should lead to a positive conviction that he is the promised prophet. It is in reference to this, that the Lord saith :

" الذين آتينا هم الكتاب يعرفونه كما يعرفون ابناء هم و ان
فريقا منهم ليكتمون الحق و هم يعلمون "

["The learned people of the Scripture know Muhammad by his qualities even as they know their own children, but some pertinacious cavillers from amongst them conceal this fact though they recognise its truth." (*Baidawy's Commentary*.)]

On inquiring of the Muslims regarding what Muhammad preached and on requesting them to recite the Qur'an, the Negus of Ethiopia came to the conclusion that the revelation of Muhammad bore the same stamp as the revelations of other prophets. He is reported to have said, "Verily, the revelation of Muhammad and that of Moses issue from the one and the same source."

It is reported that Warka Ibn Nowfal, who embraced Christianity in pre-Islamic days, had said unto Muhammad regarding the revelation, "This is the Nomos who descended on Moses, and your people

shall drive thee out." The Prophet inquired whether his people would do that ; whereupon Waraka said, "No man hath ever preached what thou hast preached, but hath made enemies, and if I live to see your day, I shall give thee my strong support," but he did not survive and died shortly afterwards.

Heraclius[1] inquired of Abu-Sufian (who was then an unbeliever) regarding Muhammad and ordered those who were in his company to contradict him should he tell an untruth. But they, one and all, agreed to what he said despite their eagerness to refute the claims of Muhammad and to belittle his influence.

By so doing Heraclius meant to ascertain the truth of Muhammad's prophethood through the consideration of his qualities and conduct as well as the circumstances in which he was placed. A most ingenious process indeed of establishing the truth !

"Have any of his forefathers been a king ?" inquired Heraclius.

"No," said they.

"Has any one, from among the Koreish, prior to him ever made this claim ?" he continued.

"No," they replied.

"Is he of noble descent ?" asked he.

"Yes," said they.

1. Heraclius (575-642) East Roman Emperor proclaimed in the year 610 A.D. In 629 A.D. the Arabs made their first incursion into his domains. In 636 they won a notable victory on the Yermuk (Hieromax) and in the following years conquered all Syria, Palestine and Egypt.

"Did you ever accuse him of falsehood before he made that claim ?" he inquired.

"No," they made answer, "we have never known him to tell a lie."

"Do the mighty follow him or the humble ?" he questioned.

"The humble follow him," said they.

"Do his followers increase or decrease ?" inquired he.

"They increase," they replied.

"Have any of them, after having embraced it, renounced his faith out of aversion to it ?" he queried.

"No," they answered.

"Was he ever known to betray a trust ?" he asked.

"No," said they.

"What doth he enjoin you to do ?" asked he.

"He enjoineth us to worship Allah alone and to associate naught else with Him, and ordaineth prayer, truthfulness, purity and charity," they said.

Heraclius then explained the significance of those questions thus : He asked them whether one of his forefathers was a king and they answered in the negative, whereupon he said, "Had one of his forefathers been a king, I would have said, 'A man claiming the kingdom of his father.' "

He asked whether any one of the Koraish prior to him had made that claim and he received the same answer ; whereupon he said, "Had any one prior to him made that claim, I would have said, 'A man follow- an instance set before.' " This, no doubt, was a thing of frequent occurrence among men, in contradistinction to proclaiming something that was never known to the people before, of to the institution of new practices diametrically opposed to their old. Such latter innovation is, indeed, of rare occurrence ; nevertheless it could take place.

He then asked whether they had ever accused him of falsehood before he proclaimed what he preached ; to this they answered in the negative, whereupon Heraclius explained, "He would not have abstained from lying to men and then have lied about the Lord." Such would have been a deliberate lie, positively against his principles, and could only have been told by someone who was in the habit of telling untruths. Moreover, if lying was not a characteristic of his, having always been known to tell the truth, and averse to lying to people, he would be more so in regard to Allah.

Heraclius then inquired whether the number of his followers had increased or decreased ; to this they answered that they had certainly increased, whereupon he explained, "Such is the course of true belief until it is rendered perfect and complete. "

He then asked whether any of his followers had renounced his faith, out of aversion to it, after embracing it; to this they answered in the negative: whereupon he explained, " Such is the case with true belief when its sheer joy penetrateth the hearts of men. "

He then inquired whether his followers had remained steadfast to his faith and had continued to uphold its tenets; to this they answered in the affirmative, whereupon he explained, "This again is a sign of truth: for falsehood is bound to be exposed in the end with the result that his disciples would desert him and that others would decline to adopt his Faith. "

The early Prophets have declared that the reign of the false claimant to prophethood is shortlived.

Heraclius further inquired whether Muhammad had ever been known to betray a trust; to this they answered in the negative; whereupon he explained, " So is it with the prophets; they betray not their trusts."

He knew that Prophets received the support of as well as trials from the Lord. It has always been the Divine rule to exercise the faith of the Prophets and the true believers, in both prosperity and adversity, so that they may attain to resignation and gratitude.

Finally, Heraclius inquired of them regarding what Muhammad had enjoined. On learning from

them that he enjoined the worship of Allah as well as prayer, truthfuluess, purity and charity and that he forbade them to worship what their fathers had worshipped before, he said, "This is a sign of a true prophet; I knew that a Prophet would appear, but it never occurred to me that he would be from amongst you. If I knew that I should be able to attain to him safely, and were to come into his presence, I should be glad to wash his feet."

Abu-Sufian Ibn Harb was the one thus addressed. He was an unbeliever and a bitter enemy of Muhammad at the time. On his way out from the presence of Heraclius, he is related to have said to those in his company, "The influence of Muhammad hath become so great that the Emperor of the Romans feareth him."

When he embraced Islam later, Aub-Sufian is related to have said, "I continued to entertain a strong belief that the mission of Muhammad would ultimately prevail until the fulfilling of the Lord's decree to guide me unto Islam."

The questions which Heraclius put to Abu-Sufian and the investigation that followed thereafter convinced him, beyond all doubt, that Muhammad was the Promised Prophet.

Every sane and normal person, who hears of these questions and the investigation that followed, will readily recognise the great ingenuity with which

the discussion was conducted, thus contributing widely to the establishment of the truth.

*
* *

Another sign testifying to the truth of a prophet is the Divine rule that the Lord giveth His support to His chosen ones and afflicteth their enemies with failure, and no matter what betide them, the final victory will be granted to the righteous.

It is feasible on consideration of this aspect of the truth, to recognise the favours which the Lord hath bestowed upon the Prophets and true believers as well as the punishment which He hath inflicted on the unbelievers.

This latter aspect of the truth has become well established through the constant corroboration it had received from such events as the Deluge and the drowning of Pharaoh and his host.

It was frequently referred to in the Qur'an as in the following verses:

” وَإِنْ يُكَذِّبُوكَ فَقَدْ كَذَّبَتْ قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمُ نُوحٍ وَعَادٌ وَثَمُودُ
وَقَوْمُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَقَوْمُ لُوطٍ وَأَصْحَابُ مَدْيَنَ وَكُذِّبَ مُوسَىٰ فَأَمْلَيْتُ
لِلْكَافِرِينَ ثُمَّ أَخَذْتُهُمْ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ نَكِيرِ . فَكَأَيِّنْ مِنْ قَرْيَةٍ أَهْلَكْنَاهَا
وَهِيَ ظَالِمَةٌ فَهِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلَىٰ عُرُوشِهَا وَبِئْرٍ مُعَطَّلَةٍ وَقَصْرٍ مَشِيدٍ

أَفَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَتَكُونَ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ يَعْقِلُونَ بِهَا أَوْ آذَانٌ
يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا فَإِنَّهَا لَا تَعْمَى الْأَبْصَارُ وَلَكِنْ تَعْمَى الْقُلُوبُ الَّتِي فِي
الصُّدُورِ "

["And if your people charge thee (Muhammad) with imposture, thou art not the only one who hath been so charged; the people of Noah, and Ad and Themoud, the people of Abraham, and the people of Lot, and the inhabitants of Madian, have charged their Prophets Noah, Hud, Saleh and Shuaib with imposture; Moses too was charged with imposture.

"The Lord hath respited those unbelievers for the allotted span of their lives; then he destroyed them and lo, how severe His disapproval was, and what a change He hath wrought!

"How many a city whose poeple were ungodly hath the Lord destroyed because of their wrong-doing and rendered desolate and in ruins; and how many a well hath been abandoned with no one to draw water therefrom after the destruction of those people; and how many a lofty castle hath the Lord deprived of its inhabitants.

"Have those people not journeyed in the land to witness the destruction of the unbelievers and take warning thereby ! Nay but their hearts are blinded and their minds rendered deficient of understanding through the following of passion and indulging in vain imitation." (*Baidawy's Commentary.*)]

V

We have already referred to the punishment which the Lord inflicted upon those who denied the truth of the prophets sent to them. Such punishment is referred to in the Qur'an as in the following verses :

" كَذَّبَتْ قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمُ نُوحٍ وَالْأَحْزَابُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ وَهَمَّتْ كُلُّ أُمَّةٍ بِرَسُولِهِمْ لِيَأْخُذُوهُ وَجَادَلُوا بِالْبَاطِلِ لِيُدْحِضُوا بِهِ الْحَقَّ فَأَخَذْتُهُمْ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عِقَابِ "

["The unbelievers of Mecca were not the only people who charged their prophet with imposture ; the people of Noah and the people of Ad and Themoud and other people who confederated against their prophets have also done so before the Meccans. Each of those people schemed against their particular prophet and strove to inflict harm and torture upon him ; they disputed with vain words to refute the truth he was sent with whereupon

the Lord hath destroyed them ; and lo, how severe His punishment was !" (*Baidawy's Commentary.*)]

And :

” أَوَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِى الْأَرْضِ فَيَنظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ
كَانُوا مِن قَبْلِهِمْ كَانُوا هُمْ أَشَدَّ مِنْهُمْ قُوَّةً وَآثَارًا فِى الْأَرْضِ فَأَخَذَهُمُ
اللهُ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ وَمَا كَانَ لَهُم مِّنَ اللهِ مِن وَاقٍ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَانَت تَّأْتِيهِمْ
رُسُلُهُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَكَفَرُوا فَأَخَذَهُمُ اللهُ إِنَّهُ قَوِيٌّ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ “

["Have the unbelievers not journeyed in the earth and witnessed the sad ending of those who charged their prophets with imposture before them and taken warning thereby ! Those past people were far mightier than the Meccans, and their castles and strongholds more enduring than theirs ; yet the Lord hath destroyed them because of their sins and there was no one to prevent this fate befalling them. This, because they disbelieved the miracles of the prophets who were sent unto them ; and the Lord hath therefore destroyed them for He is Mighty and Severe of punishment." (*Baidawy's Commentary.*)]

And :

” إِنَّا لَنَنصُرُ رُسُلَنَا وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فِى الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَيَوْمَ يَقُومُ
الْأَشْهَادُ “

["Verily We shall render support to Our apostles and to those who believed, in this world and in the hereafter when prophets, angels and true believers shall be called to bear witness on the Judgment Day." (*Baidawy's Commentary*.)]

And :

"ولقد أرسلنا رسلا من قبلك منهم من قصصنا عليك ومنهم
من لم نقصص عليك وما كان لرسول أن يأتي بآية إلا بإذن الله فإذا
جاء أمر الله قضي بالحق وخسر هنالك المبطلون"

["And We have sent apostles before thee; the story of some of whom We have told thee; and the story of others We have told thee not.

"No apostle hath the power to work a miracle unless the Lord so wills it; but when the Lord ordaineth punishment in this world or the hereafter, everyone will be accorded his just deserts, and then those who challenged the prophets to work further miracles, will perish for their disbelief" (*Baidawy's Commentary*.)]

Warning against the sad ending and the punishment inflicted upon those who evoked God's wrath is reiterated in the Chapter of the Poets after the

stories of Moses. Abraham, Noah and other prophets and is given thus :

” إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً وَمَا كَانَ أَكْثَرُهُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَهُوَ
الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ “

[“ There is surely a sign in what had befallen those people who have gainsaid their prophet for most of them believed not; verily thy Lord is mighty in dealing with those who disobeyed His injunctions, and merciful to those who obeyed.” (*Baidaway's Commentary*.)]

The Lord hath shown that knowledge of such endings is reached through the medium of seeing and hearing or both together. The former applies to those who have witnessed the destruction of the unbelievers or the traces thereof, as the annihilation of the Army of the Elephants lead by Abraha or the relics which tell of the peoples of Syria, Yemen and Hedjaz. As to the latter, knowledge thereof is derived from authentic history which is very often established by constant corroboration, as the story of Moses and Pharaoh, the drowning of Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea, the story of Abraham and Nimrod, Noah and the Deluge and many other such stories acknowledged by all religions.

The narration of these stories is indeed more reliable than any other story, be it of kings or great men —as for instance, the stories of Persian kings, Arabs in the pre-Islamic era or Greece with its learned men of medicine, astronomy and philosophy among whom Hippocrates,[1] Galen,[2] Ptolemy,[3] Socrates,[4] Plato[5] and Aristotle[6] figure prominently.

It is evident that the stories of prophets, their people and enemies are, by far, of greater import than the stories of all those others mentioned before.

It was in this same vein of argument that Carlyle, the great English writer and philosopher, addressed his fellow-Christians in his lectures on heroes when speaking of Muhammad.

1. Hippocrates (460 B.C.), a Greek physician, was born on the Island of Cos off the coast of Asia Minor. He is regarded as the "Father of Medicine" and is famous for his great Collection on Medicine.

2. Galen (130-200 A.D.), a Greek physician, was born in Pergamum, the capital of Mysia in Asia Minor. He was the author of some 500 treatises on medicine and philosophy.

3. Ptolemy, the celebrated Greek mathematician, astronomer and geographer, was born at Ptolemais Hermii, a Grecian city of the Thebaid in the 2nd century of the Christian era. He devoted his life to the study of astronomy and kindred subjects and is the author of the Ptolemaic System pertaining to the structure of the heavens and the motions of heavenly bodies.

4. Socrates, the celebrated Greek philosopher (469-399 B.C.), was born in Athens. He wrote nothing himself but his doctrines were expounded chiefly in the Dialogues of Plato and the Memorabilia of Xenophon.

5. Plato, a Greek philosopher (428-348 B.C.), author of the "Republic," "Gorgias," "Phaedo," etc.

6. Aristotle, a Greek philosopher (384-322 B.C.), was born at Stagira, a Greek colonial town on the north-western shores of the Aegaean. He was the founder of literary criticism.

The following are a few quotations of his discourse :

"Our current hypothesis about Mahomet, that he was a scheming Impostor, a falsehood incarnate, that his religion is a mere mass of quackery and fatuity, begins really to be now untenable to any one. The lies, which well-meaning zeal has heaped round this man, are disgraceful to ourselves only.

"The word this man spoke has been the life-guidance now of a hundred-and-eighty millions[1] of men these twelve-hundred years. These hundred-and-eighty millions were made by God as well as we. A greater number of God's creatures believe in Mahomet's word at this hour than in any other word whatever. Are we to suppose that it was a miserable piece of spiritual legerdemain, this which so many creatures of the Almighty have lived by and died by ? I, for my part, cannot form any such supposition. I will believe most things sooner than that. One would be entirely at a loss what to think of this world at all, if quackery so grew and were sanctioned here.

" Alas, such theories are very lamentable. If we would attain to knowledge of anything in God's true Creation, let us disbelieve them wholly ! They are the product of an Age of Scepticism ; they indicate

1. This was written in 1840, *i.e.*, about a century ago. The number of Muslims throughout the world is at present three hundred millions at a very modest estimation.

the saddest spiritual paralysis, and mere death-life of the souls of men; more godless theory, I think, was never promulgated in this earth. A false man found a religion? Why, a false man cannot build a brick house! If he does not know and follow *truly* the properties of mortar, burnt clay and what else he works in, it is no house that he makes, but a rubbish-heap. It will not stand for twelve centuries, to lodge a hundred-and-eighty millions; it will fall straightway. A man must conform himself to Nature's laws, *be* verily in communion with Nature and the truth of things, or nature will answer him, No, not at all! Speciosities are specious—ah me!—a Cagliostro,[1] many Cagliostros, prominent world-leaders, do prosper by their quackery, for a day.

"But of a Great Man especially, of him I will venture to assert that it is incredible he should have been other than true. It seems to me the primary foundation of him, and of all that can lie in him, this. No man adequate to do anything, but is first of all in right earnest about it; what I call a sincere man.

"This Mahomet, then, we will in no wise consider as an Inanity and Theatricality, a poor conscious

1. Cagliostro (1743–1795 A.D.), an Italian alchemist, and impostor, was born at Palermo. His real name was Giuseppe Balsamo. He perpetrated a series of ingenious crimes and fled from Sicily to escape punishment. He visited Greece, Egypt, Arabia, Persia, Rhodes (where he studied Alchemy) and practised his quackeries in many European countries.

ambitious schemer; we cannot conceive him so. The rude message he delivered was a real one withal; an earnest confused voice from the unknown Deep. The man's words were not false, nor his workings here below; no Inanity and Simulacrum; a fiery mass of Life cast-up from the great bosom of Nature herself. To *kindle* the world; the world's Maker had ordered it so.

"One other circumstance we must not forget: that he had no school-learning; of the thing we call school-learning none at all. The art of writing was but just introduced into Arabia; it seems to be the true opinion that Mahomet never could write.

"Curious, if we will reflect on it, this of having no books. The wisdom that had been before him or at a distance from him in the world, was in a manner as good as not there for him. Of the great souls, flamebeacons through so many lands and times, no one directly communicates with this great soul. He is alone there, deep down in the bosom of wilderness; has to grow up so,—alone with Nature and his own Thoughts.

"But, from an early age, he had been remarked as a thoughtful man. His Companions named him 'Al-Amin' The Faithful. A man of truth and fidelity; true in what he did, in what he spoke and thought. They noted that *he* always meant something. A man rather taciturn in speech; silent when there was

nothing to be said; but pertinent, wise, sincere, when he did speak; always throwing light on the matter. This is the only sort of speech *worth* speaking! Through life we find him to have been regarded as an altogether solid, brotherly, genuine man. A serious, sincere character; yet amiable, cordial, companionable, jocose even;—a good laugh in him withal: there are men whose laugh is as untrue as anything about them; who cannot laugh. A spontaneous, passionate, yet just, true-meaning man!

"All his 'ambition,' seemingly, had been, hitherto, to live an honest life; his 'fame,' the mere good opinion of neighbours that knew him, had been sufficient hitherto. Not till he was already getting old, the pururient heat of his life all burnt out and *peace* growing to be the chief thing this world could give him, did he start on the 'career of ambition'; and, belying all his past character and existence, set-up as a wretched empty charlatan to acquire what he could no longer enjoy! For my share, I have no faith whatever in that.

"Ah no: this deep-hearted Son of the Wilderness, with his beaming black eyes and open social deep soul, had other thoughts in him than ambition. A silent great soul; he was one of those who cannot *but* be in earnest; whom Nature herself has appointed to be sincere. While others walk in formulas and hearsays, contented enough to dwell there, this man could not screen himself in formulas; he was alone

with his own soul and the reality of things. The great Mystery of Existence, as I said, glared-in upon him, with its terrors, with its splendours; no hearsays could hide that unspeakable fact, 'Here am I!' Such *sincerity* as we named it, has in very truth something of divine. The word of such a man is a Voice direct from Nature's own Heart. Men do and must listen to that as to nothing else;—all else is wind in comparison.

"We will leave it altogether, this impostor hypothesis, as not credible; not very tolerable even, worthy chiefly of dismissal by us.

"Such light had come, as it could, to illuminate the darkness of this wild Arab soul. A confused dazzling splendour as of life and Heaven, in the great darkness which threatened to be death."

Carlyle then goes on to say:

"And now if the wild idolatrous men did believe this, and with their fiery hearts lay hold of it to do it, in what form soever it came to them, I say it was well worthy of being believed. In one form or the other, I say it is still the one thing worthy of being believed by all men. Man does hereby become the high-priest of this Temple of a World. He is in harmony with the Decrees of the Author of this World; cooperating with them, not vainly withstanding them.

"Islam devoured all these vain jangling Sects; and I think had right to do so. It was a Reality,

direct from the great Heart of Nature once more. Arab idolatries, Syrian formulas, whatsoever was not equally real, had to go up in flame,—mere dead *fuel*, in various senses, for this which was *fire*.

" Forger and juggler! No, no! This great fiery heart, seething, simmering like a great furnace of thoughts, was not a juggler's. His life was a Fact to him; this God's Universe an awful Fact and Reality."

" Sincerity, in all senses, seems to me the merit of the Koran; what had rendered it precious to the wild Arab men. It is, after all, the first and last merit in a book; gives rise to merits of all kinds,—nay, at bottom, it alone can give rise to merit of any kind."

Speaking of Muhammad's character Carlyle remarks:

" Traits of that kind show us the genuine man, the brother of us all, brought visible through twelve centuries,—the veritable Son of our common Mother.

" Withal I like Mahomet for his total freedom from cant. He is a rough self-helping son of the wilderness; does not pretend to be what he is not. There is no ostentatious pride in him; but neither does he go much upon humility: he is there as he can be, in cloak and shoes of his own clouting; speaks plainly to all manner of Persian Kings, Greek Emperors, what it is they are bound to do; knows well enough, about himself, 'the respect due unto thee.' In a life-and-

death war with the Bedouins, cruel things could not fail; but neither are acts of mercy, of noble natural pity and generosity wanting. Mahomet makes no apology for the one, boast of the other.

"No *Dilettantism* in this Mahomet; it is a business of Reprobation and Salvation with him, of Time and Eternity: he is in deadly earnest about it! Dilettantism, hypothesis, speculation, a kind of amateur-search for Truth, toying and coquetting with Truth: this is the sorest sin. It consists in the heart and soul of the man never having been *open* to Truth:—'living in a vain show.'

"On the other hand, Islam, like any great Faith, and insight into the essence of man, is a perfect equaliser of men: the soul of one believer outweighs all earthly kingships; all men, according to Islam too, are equal."

Finally Carlyle observes:

"These Arabs believe their religion, and try to live by it! No Christians, since the early ages, or only perhaps the English Puritans in modern times, have ever stood by their Faith as the Moslems do by theirs,—believing it wholly, fronting Time with it, and Eternity with it.

"To the Arab Nation it was as a birth from darkness into light; Arabia first became alive by means of it. A poor shepherd people, roaming unnoticed in its

deserts since the creation of the world: a Hero-Prophet was sent down to them with a word they could believe : see, the unnoticed becomes world-notable, the small has grown world-great ; within one century afterwards, Arabia is a Grenada on this hand, at Delhi on that ;—glancing in valour and splendour and the light of genius, Arabia shines through long ages over a great section of the world. Belief is great, life-giving. Is it not as if a spark had fallen, one spark, on a world of what seemed black unnoticeable sand? I said, the Great Man was always as lightning out of Heaven ; the rest of men waited for him like fuel, and then they too would flame."

VI

Among other proofs testifying to the genuineness of a claimant to prophethood is the announcement by former prophets of his advent. Such, indeed, was the case with Muhammad whose advent was announced by Christ and the prophets prior to him.

The genuineness of the claimant to prophethoood could be further attested to by his inculcating some certain precepts such as were ordained by other prophets. For as the ignorant and iniquitous judge is liable, in his judgment, to go contrary to the established rules followed by learned and righteous judges, and as the ignorant jurisconsults or quacks are liable, in their practices, to go off the beaten track of their

respective professions, so is it with the lying impostor who claims prophethood ; he is bound to deviate from the fundamental principles on which all true prophets concur as regards, for instance, the unity of God, the prophetic attributes and the life to come.

The ignorance and imposture of all such claimants are bound to be exposed on account of their contradiction to the established rules of learning and truth.

It is an established fact that Muhammad was illiterate and that he was brought up among an altogether illiterate people. Indeed, he had never read a book nor had he penned a single letter with his own hand and in this connection the Lord saith :

"وَمَا كُنْتَ تَتْلُو مِنْ قَبْلِهِ مِنْ كِتَابٍ وَلَا تَخُطُّهُ بِيَمِينِكَ
اِذًا لَارْتَابَ الْمُبْطِلُونَ"

["Thou couldst not recite any book before the revelation of the Qur'an unto thee, neither couldst thou transcribe one with thine own right hand, for hadst thou been able to read and write, the unbelievers would have doubted the divine origin thereof." (*Alucy's Commentary*.)]

The people among whom Muhammad was brought up were not only unacquainted with history of the prophets and their mission, but they were hopelessly steeped in ignorance and polytheistic beliefs

and believed not in the life to come. Monotheism was completely unknown to them and the idea of the unity of the Godhead never presented itself to their minds. They believed in a plurality of gods and the association of others with the Almighty Lord.

An examination of the Qur'an and the Law (Old Testament) will reveal their total agreement in regard to the fundamental precepts such as that of the unity of God, the prophetic attributes and the injunctions ordained by the Lord. Once this conclusion is reached, it would be easy to recognise the truth of the comment made by the Negus of Ethiopia who, on hearing the Qur'an recited, exclaimed, "Verily this and that which was revealed unto Moses issue from the one and the same source"; as also of the remark volunteered by Waraka Ibn Nowfal who said regarding the revelation of the Qur'an to Muhammad, "This is the Nomos that was wont to descend upon Moses."

" قُلْ كَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ شَهِيداً بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ وَمَنْ عِنْدَهُ عِلْمُ الْكِتَابِ "

["Say, Muhammad ! Suffice Allah unto me Who hath made manifest the truth of my mission and is the best of witnesses. Also those who are given the knowledge of the Scriptures can testify thereto." (*Alucy's Commentary.*)]

This is one of the greatest proofs of the prophethood of Muhammad. He announced unto his people such precepts and injunctions as were enjoined by

other prophets ; yet this knowledge was conveyed to him by no living creature. It had long been forgotten and was within the region of the unknown to which no one could penetrate except through Divine Revelation as saith the Lord in the following verses :

" تِلْکَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الْغَیْبِ نُوحِیهَا إِلَیْکَ مَا کُنْتَ تَعْلَمُهَا أَنْتَ
وَ لَا قَوْمُکَ مِنْ قَبْلِ هَذَا فَاصْبِرْ إِنَّ الْعَاقِبَةَ لِلْمُتَّقِینَ "

["This (the story of Noah) is one of the unknown histories which We reveal unto thee. Neither thou nor thy people were given knowledge thereof before its revelation. Therefore suffer thou patiently the afflictions and persecutions which befall thee ; for verily a happy ending shall attend the pious." (*Alucy's Commentary.*)]

And :

" ذَلِکَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الْغَیْبِ نُوحِیهِ إِلَیْکَ وَ مَا کُنْتَ لَدَیْهِمْ إِذْ
أَجْمَعُوا أَمْرَهُمْ وَ هُمْ یَمْکُرُونَ "

["This (the story of Joseph) is one of the unknown histories which We reveal unto thee. Thou wert not present with Joseph's brethren when they resolved to cast him down to the bottom of the well and plotted his destruction." (*Alucy's Commentary.*)]

It was because of this knowledge that the well-versed among the people of the Scriptures did not doubt the prophethood of Muhammad as signified by the following verses :

" ان الذين أوتوا العلم من قبله اذا يتلى عليهم يخرون للأذقان سجدا و يقولون سبحان ربنا ان كان و عد ربنا لمفعولا و يخرون للأذقان يبكون و يزيدهم خشوعا "

["When the Qur'an is recited to the learned people who have read the books of old prior to the revelation of the Qur'an, and recognised its genuineness, they fall down upon their faces, prostrate in glorification of the Lord and say, 'Our Lord is far above breaking His promise for whatever He promiseth is surely accomplished.' And they fall down upon their faces weeping, deeply touched by the exhortations of the Qur'an which intensify their humility." (*Alucy's Commentary.*)]

And :

" و يرى الذين أوتوا العلم الذى أنزل اليك من ربك هو الحق و يهدى الى صراط العزيز الحميد "

["The learned ones among the people of the Scriptures unto whom knowledge was given,

and who believed in the Qur'an, know that it is the true Word of the Lord and that it leadeth unto the way of Allah, the Mighty, the Praiseworthy." (*Alucy's Commentary.*)]

And:

" وَاِذَا سَمِعُوا مَا اُنْزِلَ اِلَى الرَّسُولِ تَرَى اَعْيُنَهُمْ تَفِيضُ مِنَ
الدَّمْعِ مِمَّا عَرَفُوا مِنَ الْحَقِّ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا آمَنَّا فَاكْتُبْنَا مَعَ الشَّاهِدِينَ "

["When those who declare they are Christians hear the Qur'an recited, thou shalt see their eyes overflow with tears, on knowing the truth. They would say, 'O Lord! We believe in what was revealed, pray count us among those who bear witness to the truth.'" (*Alucy's Commentary.*)]

It would be fitting in concluding this article, to give in the following pages some instances of the announcements by prophets of the advent of Muhammad and reference thereto in the Scriptures.

Much could be written should we wish to give all the announcements made by prophets, priests and monks regarding the advent of Muhammad. It would indeed be an endless task to undertake, before such evidence of Sateih, Wahb Ibn Monabbeh, Kaabul-Ahbar, Al-Mukaukis, Heraclius, the Negus of Ethiopia, Tobbah, Ommiah Ibn Abil-Sult and others could be exhausted.

Such announcements were so widely spread and repeated over and over again by the Prophets, that no Scripture of Jews or Christians lacked reference thereto, despite the fact that many verses have been misconstrued and corrupted by them. Nevertheless such corruption did not prejudice the true meaning of the verses as is conveyed for instance by the substitution of "Comforter" for "Paraclete" in chapters XVI and XVII of the Gospel of St. John. It was due to Divine providence that such verses retained their original meaning. For, indeed, had Muhammad not been the promised prophet whose advent Christ had announced and said was near at hand, we would wonder who could that prophet be and why was his advent so long delayed.

We will give in the following pages a short account of such Scriptural references to Muhammad as will leave no room for doubt to rankle in the minds of seekers after truth and will, at the same time render clear the Lord's saying in the Qur'an that the people of the Scriptures will find his name and qualities clearly given in their books, the Law and the Gospel, and that they know him even as they know their own children.

The name of Muhammad was clearly given in several chapters of the Gospel of Barnabas as well as in the Books of Isaiah, Daniel, Ezekiel and others. It is evident that such lofty sayings, great knowledge and

spiritual attainments given in the Gospel of Barnabas could only refer to a great and a holy prophet. The contents of this Gospel present a striking comparison to the modern ideals of present-day thinkers and philosophers.

Among other scriptural quotations alluding to the advent of Muhammad the following from the book of Deuteronomy XXXIII. 2 is significant:

"And he said: 'The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them, and shined forth from Mount Paran, and he came with thousands of saints.'"

The coming from Sinai implies the assignation of the Law to Moses, the rising up from Seir implies the assignation of the Gospel to Jesus and the shining forth from Mount Paran implies the revelation of the Qur'an to Muhammad as Paran is a mountian of Mecca.

The following quotation from the Book of Genesis, Chapter XXI. 21, in connection with the story of Ishmael fully substantiates this view:

"And he dwelt in the wilderness of Paran: and his mother took him a wife out of the land of Egypt."

According to an Arabic translation published in 1844 A.D. Book of Genesis, Chapter XVII. 20, a covenant was made with Abraham regarding his son Ishmael that one of his progeny will be followed by a great people. None of Ishmael's descendants became the

chieftain of a great people except our Prophet Muhammad.

Again in the Book of Genesis, Chapter XLIX. 10, of the Arabic translation of the Bible published in 1722, 1831 and 1844 A.D., the following verses are significant:

"The sceptre shall not depart from Judah until he cometh who claimeth all and is waited for by the people."

And in the Book of Psalms, Chapter XLV. 2, 3, 5 and 9, addressing a future prophet:

"Grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee for ever."

"Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty."

"Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the King's enemies; whereby the people fall under thee."

"Kings daughters were among thy honourable women."

This address could only be meant for Muhammad as Jesus was not the prophet who resorted to arms in defence of religion, nor indeed did any people fall under him. He sought refuge in vain to escape the persecution of the Jews and was made the object of insult and derision and was even put to a violent death as the Christians allege.

No less significant are the following verses, Chapter XVI. 7 of the Gospel of St. John:

"Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Paraclete[1] will not come unto you."

And Chapter XIV. 15, 16 and 29 of St. John:

"If you love me, keep my commandments."

"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Paraclete that he may abide with you for ever."

"And now I have told you before it came to pass, that, when it comes to pass, ye might believe."

The other "Paraclete" in whom Christ bade them believe and who was to abide with them for ever is no other than Muhammad for no other prophet came after Jesus, and it is not conceivable that he has not come until now as Christ very often told his advent was near at hand.

It is easy to draw inferences from such saying as: "Abide with you for ever" and "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Paraclete will not come unto you."

1. In the new version of the Gospel, "Comforter" is substituted for "Paraclete."

In pages 63 and 64 of his book *Saiful-Muslimeen,*" Hyder Ali Al-Korashy mentions that the Armenian priests have translated the book of Isaiah from the original into the Armenian language in 1666 A.D. and the translation was published in 1733 A.D. by Anthony Bortelly. In Chapter XLII of this translation a verse is given wherein the qualities of the prophet who will preach a new law and assume great power and authority under the name of Ahmed,[1] were detailed.

This translation is still retained by the Armenians and it could easily be verified by seekers of truth.

So much then for tangible proofs quoted from the Scriptures. Muhammad did not lack such qualities as could only pertain to true prophets. In this connection, it would be fitting to record in the following pages some of his personal traits and actions which will shed light on a phase of his life hitherto neglected by most biographers. The importance of such an account cannot be overestimated, for indeed man's personal character provides a clear indication of his true nature and the state of his mind and soul.

It was not by accident that Muhammad was acclaimed the best of men, the most generous and brave. He was most tolerant and suffered patiently the persecution of his enemies.

1. One of the names of the Prophet Muhammad is Ahmed.

Lying was most abominable to him; he used to avoid and completely ignore anyone of his own folk who told a lie and it was not until the delinquent showed true penitence that he spoke to him again.

When he gazed up into heaven, he was wont to say: "O Wielder of hearts! confirm Thou my heart in Thy obedience." But knowing as he did of the oscillation and inconsistency of men's hearts, he used often to reiterate. "Nay! By Him Who wields the hearts of men."

He was taciturn and laughed on rare occasions. His liberality and kindliness won the hearts of all those around him. He used to inquire of the servant if he was in need of anything and never did he, by word or deed, cause distress to his people. Unto no one would he break bad news. He gave freely unto the poor, visited them, came to their sick-beds and gave them of his unbounded sympathy and attended their funerals when death claimed a dear one from their midst.

Pleasant of face and amiable was he to the sinner of the deepest dye that mayhap he win him over thereby.

Oftimes the Lord engaged his thoughts. In vain discourse never did he indulge and long indeed did he pray to the Lord.

The widow, the poor and even the slave never sought his help in vain for never did he refuse to give or disdain to accompany any of them and help accomplish his object.

He was the most indulgent, equitable and virtuous of all men His hand never touched a woman's unless she was his wife or a near kinswoman.

He was most modest and unassuming; he was serene without being haughty, eloquent without being loquacious and above all most pleasant of mien and completely indifferent to all worldly affairs.

He sat in the company of the poor and shared his food with the needy and wayfarer. The goodly he honoured, and the noble he sought to attach to him in friendship.

He gave unto his kindred but never did he give them priority over the more deserving ones among others.

He was equanimous of temper; anger never ruffled his serenity. The plea of the penitent he was never loth to accept.

He jested, yet never did he utter but a truth. Neither did he roar with laughter nor look disapprovingly upon innocent play.

Nothing ever engaged his attention so much as the worship of God or an indispensable occupation whereby to sustain himself and his own.

He never looked down on the poor for their penury or feared a king for his might and dominion.

He forbore from retribution for anything done save the breaking of the Lord's law; and never did he have the choice of two ways but he chose the easier of the two unless he feared to commit a sin or to alienate his kindred thereby.

He never returned evil for evil but was always prone to pass over the offence and forgive the offender. Love and compassion were characteristic of Muhammad; no one was more concerned than he to seek the interest and welfare of the people.

Voices were not raised in his presence, he inspired awe and reverence in the hearts of those with whom he came into contact. He was open-handed and his forbearance knew no bounds even on occasions when it was most severely taxed.

His manner and tone were sincere and reassuring; he inspired reverence in whosever chanced to see him and deep affection in whosever knew him.

He was wont to say unto his disciples: "Let no one from among you bear ill tidings regarding others unto me for I desire to come unto you clear without prejudice."

He used to inquire of people after those they knew and never failed to praise the good and to condemn the evil.

He was pleasant to his companions and kindly disposed towards them. He was never known to be rude or impertinent, nor did he ever speak disparagingly of any one or seek the faults and failings of others.

When he spoke, his companions used to be hushed and hang breathlessly on his words and it was only when he relapsed into silence that they did speak, so weighty indeed was his counsel and so grave were his words.

"Announce ye glad tidings and alienate not the people but make easy the way unto them and constrain them not unto narrow straits," he used to counsel his messengers.

He ate but little and is related to have said in this connection : " A few morsels may well suffice man to sustain his body." On coming home he used to inquire : " Have you aught of food ? " and should there be none, which was not an infrequent occurrence, he was wont to say : " I fast this day."

"Help ye fulfil the object of him who cannot attain it," says Muhammad, " for whoso fulfilleth his object will the Lord vouchsafe him security on the Day of Great Terror " (Judgment Day).

On setting out to defend the Faith he prayed to the Lord, " O Lord, of Thee do I seek aid, and in Thy Hallowed Name do I go forth and fight in Thy cause."

On occasions when he was roused to anger while standing, he used to sit down and if he was sitting, he used to assume a reclining position to restrain his feelings thereby.

If he missed one of his companions three days, he was wont to inquire after him; should he happen to be absent he would pray for his safe return; if at home, he would visit him or, if ill, he would inquire after his health.

On bidding anyone farewell, he was wont to grasp him by the hand and never did he withdraw his own hand until the other withdrew his.

He never turned down the plea of whosoever solicited his help; should he be in a position to give it at the time, he never hesitated in doing so straightway but if he lacked the substance whereby to alleviate the straitened circumstances of his petitioner, he promised to come to his aid as soon as such was available.

Unstinted were his bounties; in giving he never had a thought for himself and saved nought for the morrow.

On rising, after being seated, he was wont to say: "Praise be to the Lord, all thanks are due unto Thee, there is no God worthy of worship but Thee; I pray for Thy forgiveness and am penitent unto Thee."

He hardly ever said "No" in response to his petitioner. If he was asked to do something to which he took no exception, prompt came his reply "Yea," but if he cared not to do it, he relapsed into silence.

His whole existence was so bound up with thoughts of the Lord that he gave mention to His Hallowed Name on all occasions.

He made place for the weary wayfarer to mount behind him on his steed. He ate from off the ground; nay, he never declined the invitation of the slave.

He used to incline the pitcher for the thirsty cat to drink therefrom; and he so admired the man who would wait upon his frieneds that he praised and prayed for him.

He milked his own ewe and attended to his own personal needs. He used to wake up during the night and stand for hours in worship of the Lord, so much so that his feet became swollen on more than one occasion.

The best meal for him was that in which many participated. He never reserved aught to himself of the affluence that came his way and used to say in this connection: "It pleaseth me not have I a mountain (like Ohod) of gold to retain a single Dinar thereof unless it be devoted to the cause of my Faith."

On one occasion he received several Dinars which he distributed among those present. Six Dinars were

left over and he gave them to one of his womenfolk. That night he lay sleepless in his bed and was restless until he had divided those as well among his household. "Now my mind is at rest!" he said.

Suffice it to say in testimony of Muhammad's humility and unworldliness, that when he died his shield was already in pledge to provide the wherewithal for his family.

During his lifetime he contented himself with the minimum of necessities as regards food, clothing and habitation and renounced all else though he could have lived in state and luxury had he but desired to do so.

Such was Muhammad the Prophet of Islam, humble in life and humble in death, but withal blessed and exalted by the Lord on High.

VII

His Tolerance and Forgiveness

The most tolerant and indulgent of men are sometimes apt to lose their patience and be roused to anger when their patience is sorely tried.

Not so Muhammad, for his was the patience that grew with persecution and increased in the face of insolence and revilement.

"Never did the Prophet have recourse to retribution save when the Lord's Law was violated," says Aysha.

It is related that when the Prophet's eye-tooth was broken and his face lacerated at Ohod, his Companions were so deeply chagrined that they asked, "Wouldst thou not invoke the Lord's wrath against the unbelievers?" to which he replied, "I have not been sent to invoke evil upon men but to pray for the Lord's favour and mercy unto them. Forgive, O Lord, my people for they know not what they do."

Such unparalleled display of tolerance and magnanimity gives an insight into the Prophet's character and the momentous nature of his mission; for not only did he refrain from retaliation for the physical injury and humiliation afflicted upon him, but he also forgave his assailants, nay, even took pity on them so that he prayed for them and interceded with the Lord on their behalf; their ignorance was to him a sufficient excuse, and hence he prayed the Lord for them for "they know not what they do."

On one occasion when the process of the distribution of spoils was in progress, the Prophet was harshly interrupted by an Arab who said, "Observe thou justice in dealing out the spoils for this is no fair division." Muhammad no more than calmly explained the reason why such division was made. But his Companions were so infuriated at the Arab's insolence that they wanted to kill him were it not for the Prophet forbidding them and had done so.

On another occasion when Ibn-Al-Harith resolved to slay Muhammad, he came upon him, in one of the

expeditions, while he was having his midday sleep in the shade of a lone tree at a good distance from his Companions.

Muhammad had just awakened from his sleep to find Al-Harith standing at his head with a drawn sword in his hand. "What protects you from me?" said Al-Harith. "Allah protecteth me from you," said Muhammad. The sword fell from the hand of Al-Harith whereupon the Prophet picked it up and said to him, "What protecteth you from me now." "Be thou the best of forgivers," said Al-Harith, which plea the Prophet granted on the spot and set him free. On returning to his tribe, Al-Harith is related to have said, "I have come from the presence of the best and most noble of men."

Nor was this the only instance in which he forgave the assailant who attempted at his life. He forgave the Jewess who administered poison to him in a lamb of which he had partaken. She confessed the evil deed and was forgiven and set free.

"Never was the Prophet," says Aysha, "inclined to retribution for any harm done him unless the Lord's Law be violated; neither did he smite anything save in the cause of Allah nor strike a woman or a servant all his life."

A man was once brought before him for intending to kill him. "Fear thou not! Fear thou not!"

said the Prophet, "for even hadst thou intended it, thou wouldst not have been able to do it."

Before his adoption of Islam, Zeid the Jew, once came to demand of the Prophet the settlement of a debt. He grabbed him by his clothes and harshly spoke thus to him, "Verily, ye sons of Abdul-Muttalib are a recalcitrant lot." Omar, who was present at the time, severely chided the Jew for his insolence but the Prophet who stood smiling said, "Verily, he and I are more in need of a different treatment from thee O Omar ; thou shouldst have bidden me to be prompt in settlement of the debt and him to be more courteous in demand thereof. Three days yet remain ere the debt falleth due." He then bade Omar discharge the debt and to give his creditor twenty handfuls more for the treatment he had received at Omar's hands.

Muhammad's behaviour on this occasion, so favourably impressed Zeid that he adopted Islam soon after.

"I have," says Zeid, "satisfied myself as to all the signs of Muhammad's prophethood except as regards to two which I have yet to know : "Whether his temper is not outstripped by his forbearance and whether his tolerance is not increased by insolence."

He put him to the test and found him not wanting in this respect.

The books of Traditions abound in such instances which we could scarcely deal with in this short treatise. It is sufficient to point out, in testimony of Muhammad's forbearance and forgiveness, the tolerant attitude which he always maintained in the face of the ever-increasing persecution by the Qureish. When, however, he triumphed over them and entered Mecca, the scene of his sorest sufferings and persecutions, he nobly forgave them and granted them full amnesty.

"How do ye think I shall treat you?" inquired Muhammad of the Qureish on the surrender of Mecca.

"We hope for good," said they, "a noble brother and the son of a noble brother." Whereupon he said, " I say even as my brother Joseph said : 'There shall be no reproach against you this day ; may Allah forgive you for He is the Most Merciful' ; go, ye are free. "

His Liberality and Magnanimity

In the exercise of charity Muhammad was unique and incomparable. No one ever petitioned Muhammad in vain. Always ready to help and give his all to the first petitioner who came to his door, he retained naught of the affluence that came to him and lived, throughout his life, eve as then humblest live.

It is related on the authority of Anas, one of his Companions, that a man once petitioned Muhammad for a living and received all the sheep that were grazing between two mountains nearby.

On returning to his people, the man called them to Islam and announced unto them that "Muhammad giveth even as him who hath no fear of the onset of poverty."

More than one person received the bounty of one hundred camels. One, Safwan, had on one occasion received three hundred, a hundred, then another hundred, then yet anotherh undred.

Al-Abbas was once given such a quantity of gold that he could not carry it all and had to abandon the attempt.

On one occasion, ninety thousand Dirhams[1] were sent to Muhammad. He ordered them to be laid on a mat in front of him and started on the spot to distribute this huge sum, and never did he refuse a petitioner until the whole ninety thousands were exhausted.

His Modesty and Urbanity

"The Prophet," says Aysha, "was, by nature, the least disposed to vile words or deeds nor did he ever wilfully have recourse thereto. . . He never returned evil for evil but he was always prone to pass over the offence and forgive the offender."

1. A Dirham is a silver coin equivalent to nearly six pence.

In referring to anything distasteful, he was wont to express it euphemistically to spare his hearer's susceptibilities.

His was a company of modesty, goodliness and righteousness.

So highly indeed did his people hold him in esteem that they conferred upon him the epithet of "the Faithful, the Trustworthy" long before his prophetic mission.

In this connection, Al-Nadr Ibn Al-Harith, who was a sworn enemy of Muhammad, thus addressed Qureish :

"When a youth, Muhammad was in character the best among you, the most honest and true yet when grey hair glistened on his temples and he announced unto you his mission, you said, 'A sorcerer for sooth !' Nay, by Allah, he is no sorcerer."

His Humility and Self-Abnegation

We have already alluded to the Prophet's complete indifference to the world. Suffice it to point out in this connection how little indeed he cared for it and how unheedful he was of the joys and luxury it offered; yet the world lay at his feet and the dominion of Islam extended far and wide beyond the Peninsula. Yet Muhammad died in poor circumstances and his shield was already in pledge to provide the wherewithal for his family.

A month or even two might elapse and no fire would be kindled on Muhammad's hearth. To quote Aysha, "Never did the family of Muhammad eat their fill of barley bread for three full days in succession. . . The Apostle of Allah left not a single Dinar[1] or Dirham nor a sheep or a camel. . . On his death there was nothing eatable in my house save half a loaf of barley bread left over on a shelf."

"Once," Aysha goes on to say, "the Propnet told me: 'The world had been offered me but I declined ; I may go hungry one day and eat my fill another ; on the former, I would humbly pray to the Lord and on the latter I would glorify and praise Him.' "

Concluding, we give in the following pages the views of some modern writers on Muhammad. A modern writer says : "Virtue, as all moralists agree, and as reason points out, could not be associated with vice, for should that ever take place, one of them will inevitably dominate the other and once it had become dominant, it will exercise its peculiar influence over men. Vice and virtue are diametrically opposed and their respective influence, as established by intuitive and empirical knowledge, is well-defined in each case and admits of no confusion.

"Should I claim, therefore, that the spirit of Muhammad was the greatest spirit that has ever been

1. A Dinar is an ancient Arab gold coin of 65 grains weight.

known since the creation of the world, no one would hesitate to admit the truth of this statement : should he do so, I would simply ask him to point out, if he can, a single individual who achieved success in one of the following three objects :

"Firstly, the unification of a people who were divided into hostile tribes and among whom blood-feuds had never ceased from time immemorial ; and the stamping out entailed by such unification, of the prevailing vices of those dark ages and the institution of virtue and goodliness in lieu thereof.

"Secondly, the prescription of a law that gave them power and made possible their ascendancy and expansion after having practically been unheard-of.

"Thirdly, the extirpation of false beliefs and the institution of a religion inculcating such high ideals as to admit of its growth and development in a most surprising manner up to the present day. Many people embrace this religion of their own accord and through no missionary propaganda. Little wonder therefore that this religion is confidently expected to supersede all other religions on some future day."

Thus with no human aid or counsel to direct it, had this great soul accomplished those three gigantic tasks. So complete indeed was the success it achieved that the leading men of learning in the West unanimously recognise its success as a signal event in the history of the world.

With its mission accomplished, this great spirit rose in satisfaction to where it belonged. The name of Muhammad has been deeply engraved on the pages of history leaving an indelible mark on the minds of men and endowing its followers with its invigorating and uplifting influence.

With all these successes, Muhammad never lost an iota of the initial purity of his soul and remained, throughout his life, unaffected by successes which would have rendered others the most conceited and vainglorious of men.

He continued to be the same kindly, modest and contented person that he always had been. In all his actions he offered a living example of equity and perfection.

He was kindliness incarnate ; the little urchins of Medina would confidently take him by the hand and lead him round the town on an errand. So great was his kindness and love for children that he disdained not to converse with and accompany them ; nay he evinced great pleasure to do so.

Would not the total disregard of material success which Muhammad had shown throughout be considered a mighty proof of his greatness and rectitude ?

Kings, legislators, philosophers, leaders have all succumbed to the temptation of but a fraction of this success.

But the power which Muhammad enjoyed was a spiritual one and proceeded from on high. He was not therefore amenable to the baneful influence of temptation and his thoughts were far removed from the material successes the world offered.

It is noteworthy that all chroniclers agree that the great soul of Muhammad is unique and singular. Environment and consuetudinary usages exercised no influence over it—which fact reveals a surprising phenomenon in human nature for how indeed could Muhammad, who was born and bred among a heathen and ignorant people, be immune from the effects of customs, morals and beliefs which had prevailed for generations in that part of the world ? How is it, that heredity so failed to function in his case that his character showed no trace of the peculiar traits of his people ?

How could he overcome singlehanded those unsurmountable difficulties and emerge from the mighty struggle, in which he was engaged, unscathed and unaffected ?

How could he achieve success in face of overwhelming odds and embark as he did on what was seemingly a hopeless quest ?

How could he win those millions of people to his cause and bend their wills to his own ?

Would not such a soul be justly termed the greatest in the world ? And would not its will be regarded as the most indomitable ever known ?

Could its opposers account for such unprecedented influence which was the lot of Islam to exercise over the world ?

Nay, history as well as reason point out that such great achievements could never have been realised without Divine favour and support.

VIII

That Muhammad met with stubborn opposition, on the part of his people, is a fact well established by both history and tradition. They left no stone unturned in their desire to refute his claims and did all that lay in their power to prejudice his cause. Proud kings and princes, great poets and orators have all taken their stand against Muhammad and united in a joint effort to rebut his pretensions rather than follow him or submit to his claims. Their vanity and their zeal for their beliefs and timeworn dogmas of their forefathers stood an unsurmountable barrier between them and the admission of Muhammad's teachings. Yet, in face of relentless persecution, he never ceased to call them unto the very reverse of their beliefs and to point out fearlessly the folly of deifying their wooden idols.

Alone and unaided, he delivered his message and was heedless of the spirit of antagonism which he evoked

in an altogether conservative people; small wonder that this should have been the case, for men are apt to cherish what they are used to, harmful though it may be, and are averse to anything new, no matter how advantageous it may prove.

Notwithstanding his weak position and the apparently hopeless end he had set himself to achieve, he patienly reasoned with them and advanced proofs of his claims. Through repeated exhortations and admonitions, a feeling of anxiety was engendered in their hearts; yet withal, he proffered them goodly counsel even as a king whose word is law unto his people and whose commandments are just and equitable, or even as a wise father who is solicitous for his children's welfare and whose severity is tempered with mercy and kindness.

But what astounded them most of all was the fact that Muhammad who was humble and illiterate and far below them in station and knowledge yet dared to condemn and criticise their actions. Yet his cause prevailed in the end and in wonderment they stood at such might coupled with humility, such power where disability was thought to dwell, such knowledge despite illiteracy and such wisdom in an age of ignorance and idolatry!

Could there be a greater evidence of the purity of his great soul and the support given thereto by the Lord?

An illiterate person, yet, despite his illiteracy, calls the master writers of the day to the intelligent understanding of their own texts ! He, who had never been tutored, yet calls upon the learned people to rectify their knowledge ! He who was born and bred far away from learning and erudition yet had come to guide the master minds of his time ! He, who was reared among a backward people, yet had come to correct the corrupted beliefs of philosophers ! He, who was an orphan among a primitive race to whom nature and the universe were beyond comprehension, yet had prescribed for the benefit of the world at large the principles of an efficient law whereby the salvation of mankind is assured. Those, who aspired to blessedness, had only to follow his example to attain to eternal salvation.

Indeed Muhammad's character combined such noble traits as to offer to all men of all kinds a perfect pattern for imitation. This itself constitutes a miracle which no man of sound reason can deny. Muhammad's character did not only offer one phase to be judged by, but combined very, very many phases at one and the same time. As a teacher, guide, preacher, warrior, leader, legislator, judge, philosopher, chieftain, politician, ruler, party to a treaty, combatant, worshipper and a prophet, he was a model of perfection. And just as history and tradition record him thus, they are both agreed that such combination could not possibly be displayed by one single ordinary

individual. But Muhammad was indeed no ordinary person. If we will but contemplate his life-story, his traditions and the tenets of his religion, we will be convinced beyond doubt that his life offers a guiding light to mankind and endows men with a spirit of power and vigour to aid them in the exercise of their vocations; and above all a law which warrants the realisation of men's aspirations.

Conclusion

Concluding this series of articles on the Prophet Muhammad, we summarise in the following pages the views expressed by Count Henry, the great French orientalist, when dealing with the same subject.

He classified his views into ten arguments :

(1) In establishing the truth of Muhammad's prophethood we need only point out his own conviction that his mission was a true and a real one and that his ultimate object was to extirpate idol-worship and substitute God's worship in lieu thereof.

(2) Muhammad's faith was inborn in him. It grew within his conscience into an all-pervading belief which no other soul prior to him had ever conceived.

This unwavering faith revolutionised the thoughts of men and was directly responsible for the change that took place in the destinies of mankind over

a large area of the globe. Muhammad could neither read nor write. He was, as he repeatedly described himself, an illiterate prophet. It is significant that no one of his contemporaries ever denied this assertion.

He never read a book nor did he seek guidance from any of his predecessors in the matter of religion.

(3) We all know of the great hardships which Muhammad endured and the mental agonies which he suffered in silence. The secret of his fortitude lay in the fact that the Lord caused his soul to be open only for the reception of the true faith. It is for this reason that he frequently sought solitude to escape the scenes of idolatry and polytheism which acted as thorns in his side whenever he came across them.

The oneness and unity of God had so pervaded his soul that he used to seek the solitude of Mount Hera to hold communion with and give prayers to the Lord.

(4) It is indeed baffling to the human mind how such verses (of the Qur'an) came to be uttered by an illiterate person like Muhammad, verses whose equivalent the master minds of mankind utterly fail to produce in both words and meaning. The failure of the Arabs themselves who were the acclaimed masters of eloquence and oratory and who were intent on the refutation of Muhammad's claims, points conclusively to its Divine origin.

It is related that when the Qur'an was recited to Ukba Ibn Rabieh, he was so impressed by its beauty and eloquence that he straightway embraced Islam.

Not less impressed was the Negus of Ethiopia whose eyes overflowed with tears when the Chapter of Zachariah and the verses regarding John were recited to him by Jafar Ibn Abi Taleb. In this connection it is recorded that, on the following day, the Negus requested Jafar to recite the story of Jesus from the Qur'an, which he did. The Negus was surprised to hear that Jesus was the servant and Apostle of the Lord and that he proceeded from the spirit of God. He took up a thin rod that was lying in front of him and said to Jafar :

"The difference betwixt what I have just heard from you and that which our religion saith is no more than the thickness of this rod."

This rod has however become stronger in that it stood between Ethiopia and Islam and rendered it a Christian country up to the present day.

(5) It is hard to believe that human eloquence could produce such effect, but the eloquence of the Qur'an is so positively flawless and inimitable that no man on earth or angel in heaven could produce anything like it and its origin is therefore unquestionably Divine.

(6) The Qur'an constitutes in itself a proof of Muhammad's prophethood. Up to the present day it still remains one of the mysteries which no one could solve or fathom save those who implicitly believe in the authenticity of its revelation and are convinced of its Divine origin. But even then it is questionable whether they fully understand its intricacies.

(7) No one can deny that Muhammad displayed all the signs of true prophethood in so far as he delivered a message at the behest of his Lord—a message which he wholly believed to be true.

Muhammad believed that his mind was so completely influenced by a Divine spirit that he no longer exercised any control over it. He was merely the instrument of God and the medium through which the word of God was conveyed to mankind.

His ego completely disappeared and was sunk deep in the idea of the all-pervading Providence in which he implicitly believed.

Whether the revelation came to him in his dreams or at times of unconsciousness, it is difficult to say, but in either case, the genuineness of these revelations cannot be gainsaid.

(8) Emotions used to show clearly on his face; some thought that he was subject to fits, a conjecture which proved totally unfounded for Muhammad

embarked on his mission after the fortieth year and never before in his life did he show signs of ill health to justify this assumption. Very few people indeed could be so well-known throughout the span of their lives as Muhammad was and so thoroughly indeed was his life treated that even such details as the number of grey hair in his beard did not escape the traditionists' attention.

Had Muhammad been suffering from ill health or fits, as it has often been alleged, it would have been impossible to hide the fact and one or two of his biographers would have at least referred to it. Muhammad's states of unconsciousness were not due to fits or any other natural paroxysms. They were essentially the manifestations of an awe-inspiring experience under which he laboured when the Word of God was revealed to him.

Muhammad was not an innovater nor did he profess to be a writer. Indeed, we find some similarity between the Qur'an and the Law (Old Testament) in a few places but the reason for this is not hard to find. The Qur'an was revealed to set the seal to previous Scriptures just as Muhammad was sent as the last of the prophets. His mind and soul came under the same influence which affected the minds and souls of other prophets ; he worshipped the same God as they worshipped. Little wonder therefore that words should be similar or even identical in some cases despite the fact that the Lord's

dispensations had been given unto mankind through the media of different prophets. For, did they not proceed from one and the same source ?

(9) Muhammad was definitely averse to all pomp and luxury. He was not haughty nor was he covetous of wealth or worldly power. He used to milk his own ewes, sit on the ground, mend his own clothes and cobble his own shoes. Contentment pervaded his whole character for never did he complain of his lot. He left this world, never once in his life having had his fill of barley bread.

He never maintained a court or permitted a retinue to attend him. His was a spiritual authority which aspired to no worldly pomp ; neither did he seek the aid of a vizier to administer it.

He despised money and hated to have any of it left on his hands. During his life he attained to the highest pinnacle of authority and virtually exercised absolute power, yet never did he abuse it or go beyond the limits of equity. Of this power he had only one symbol—a staff ; where no king was more entitled to a sceptre than he.

(10) Muhammad resolutely set himself to exterminate paganism. In the choice between paganism and the worship of one Almighty God, he never hesitated for a single moment to choose the latter. His conviction never faltered throughout, and his zeal

never showed signs of abatement from beginning to end.

He was averse to the amassing of wealth and whenever he had a little thereof, he straightway spent it in charity.

On one occasion, he gave his wife Aysha a small sum of money to keep. When he was taken ill, he directed that it should be given to the poor and when this was done, he exclaimed, "Now I am at peace for verily it behoves me not to meet my Lord with this money still in my possession."

In his last address to the people, he said:

"O ye who hearken unto me, if I have smitten any of you, there is my back for him to smite; if I have besmirched anyone's reputation let him wreak his vengeance on mine; if I have robbed anyone's property let him exact it out of mine; for verily this day he is secure and my heart beareth no malice."

When he finished his address and made to depart, a man seized him by his clothes and demanded the settlement of three Dirhams which Muhammad owed him. The debt was discharged on the spot, the Prophet saying: "Better the shame of this world than that of the hereafter."

The Holy Qur'an

I

THE Holy Qur'an is the Word of Allah revealed to His Prophet Muhammad to proclaim unto the world, to lead mankind to salvation. It is a standing miracle which will never cease to provide wonders to amaze the keenest intellects nor shall its wonders fade away as time goes by. Some books may become obsolete and cease to fit in with the modern ideals of civilisation or to touch, even incidentally, on new developments and discoveries—avoiding the treatment of social sciences and throwing no light upon modern philosophy.

Not so the Qur'an! Clearer and clearer it becomes with the development and progress of science, while new discoveries pile proof on proof in testimony of its Divine origin and truth, for thus saith the Lord :

"سَنُرِيهِمْ آيَاتِنَا فِى الْآفَاقِ وَفِى أَنْفُسِهِمْ حَتَّىٰ يَتَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُ

الْحَقُّ "

["We will shew the unbelievers Our signs in distant climes through the signal victories achieved by Islam and through the wonders wrought in the creation of man till it becomes manifest unto them that the Qur'an is the truth." (*Baidawy's Commentary.*)]

Some commentators interpret certain verses of the Qur'an as merely metaphorical. The following verse was so treated :

" حتى اذا اتوا على وادى النمل قالت نملة يا ايها النمل ادخلوا
مساكنكم لا يحطمنكم سليمان و جنوده و هم لا يشعرون "

["Until when the hosts of Solomon came to the Valley of Naml,[1] an ant felt them coming and hissed something which Solomon understood to be a warning to other ants to enter their dwellings lest he and his hosts unknowingly crush them." (*Alucy's Commentary.*)]

We are told, by entomologists, of the ingeneous and ordered ways of ants and of astounding feats which they perform, facts which interest every Muslim to thus find them established in his Holy Book long before science had revealed them to the world.

1. The Valley of Naml is a valley abounding in ants and is situated between Jibrin and Asqalan in Syria.

Another verse is :

"وَمَا مِنْ دَآبَّةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا طَائِرٍ يَطِيرُ بِجَنَاحَيْهِ إِلَّا أُمَمٌ أَمْثَالُكُمْ"

["No kind of beast is there living on the surface of the earth in any region thereof, nor bird that flieth with its wings in any clime, but are communities like unto you." (*Alucy's Commentary.*)]

Every community has necessarily a language which is used as a medium through which thoughts could be expressed ; and so too have birds as Solomon says in the following verse :

"يَـٰأَيُّهَا النَّاسُ عُلِّمْنَا مَنْطِقَ الطَّيْرِ"

["O men ! we have been given the knowledge of the significance of birds' voices as a miracle to urge you to believe." (*Baidawy's Commentary.*)]

Commentators, despite their great precision and meritorious efforts, could only establish such natural phenomena referred to in the Qur'an as were commensurate with the knowledge and scientific standards of their times. They could only reveal very little of the mysteries contained in the Qur'an. Their efforts were mainly directed to showing the flawless style and eloquence of the Book thinking that this constitutes

its inimitability and provides the proof of its authenticity ; yet the concealed secrets of the Qur'an are even far greater and more stupendous than its beauty of diction. The following verse is an example :

" وَأَنَّهُ هُوَ رَبُّ الشِّعْرَى "

["And that He (Allah) is the absolute Lord of the Sirius[1] worshipped in the days of yore to the exclusion of Allah." (*Alucy's Commentary.*)]

We were not aware of the magnitude of the Sirius to which the Qur'an refers in this verse until the natural sciences disclosed that the sun is a million and three hundred thousand times greater than the earth and that the Sirius is many times greater than the sun and that the light of the sun is but one-fiftieth of the light of the Sirius. Owing, however, to the great distance which separates it from the earth, we cannot see it except with powerful telescopes.

Thus is it that the progress of science has provided an interpretation of the Qur'an and incidentally a fresh proof of its Divine origin.

The miracles of medicine of the Qur'an concerning the lawful and the forbidden, and the teachings concerning certain devotional rites followed by our forefathers, have been provided, thanks to the progress of medicine, with a clear and reasonable explanation.

1. *Vide* footnote page 17.

No less amazing are the astronomic facts contained in the Qur'an, facts which only expert astronomers could hope to know, but were necessarily beyond the ken of commentators.

Again, the establishment by the Qur'an of a spirit world which was once regarded by the enemies of Islam as mythical and absurd, has now become, through the development of science, an established fact.

Nor do ethical, social, philosophic questions lack corroboration. Recent researches have fully borne out the concepts of the Qur'an.

From the ethical point of view the Qur'an inculcates the noblest traits of conduct which are held to be the acme of human perfection.

As far as the social side is concerned, the Qur'an offers its followers the most efficient of social systems. These systems are only now being expounded by the philosophers of Europe, who strongly urge their people to adopt them—thus unconsciously coming nearer and nearer the True Faith.

It is a wonderful feature of Islam that there is not a single controversial question arising between sociologists as for instance the question of marriage and divorce, or between moralists as the question of independence and freedom of woman, or between economists as the question of usury, or between jurists

or historians, but Islam has given the last word on the subject and the learned people, after long controversy and research, have in the end to revert to the ruling of Islam.

Should one take into consideration the era of the Prophet, the condition of his country and the people among whom he was sent, and compare this with the great mass of knowledge and information contained in the Qur'an, one would be strongly impelled, by both reason and conscience, not to regard the foretelling by the Prophet of future events as the only miracle testifying to the truth of his prophethood. One would be compelled to admit that the principles of civilisation expounded by him are no less than a social miracle, that the noble conduct which he preached is equally an ethical miracle and that the establishment of scientific facts, such as the fertilisation of plants by wind, or the classification of plants into male and female species, when these facts were only lately discovered, is no less than a scientific miracle.

The astronomic facts which were established by the Qur'an and were taken by some to point to the rotation of the earth and other planets, are no less than an astronomic miracle.

The true history which he revealed, despite the fact that he was illiterate and never read a book or had a tutor is no less than a historical miracle.

Still more astounding is the following quotation from the Qur'an about Zulqarnain[1] and the description of the regions which he invaded, a description which tallies with the geographical features of those regions :

" حتى اذا بلغ مغرب الشمس وجدها تغرب في عين حمئة "

["Until when Zulqarnain reached a westward point of the earth he found the sun goes down into black muddy waters." (*Alucy's Commentary.*)]

Geography gives the meaning of " Tundra " as muddy tracts of water which, in summer, cover the lower parts of the basins of the rivers Ob, Yenisei and Lena in Siberia and are transformed in winter into a great ice plain. No other region in the world is known to answer this description except that one, nor to be of this magnitude which reaches such an extent that the sun appears to the onlooker to sink there, save that part of the world.

The eloquence and flawless style in which the Qur'an was couched captivated the senses of the Arabs who were the acclaimed masters of eloquence and resulted in the conversion of may of them—a fact which is no less than a miracle itself.

The Qur'an says in this connection :

" قل لئن اجتمعت الانس والجن على ان يأتوا بمثل هذا القرآن لا يأتون بمثله ولو كان بعضهم لبعض ظهيرا "

1. Zulqarnain, a great prince of the pre-Christain era, whose conquests extended far east and west. Commentators differ widely as to his proper identity but they all agree that he was a true believer.

["Were men and djinn assemble to produce anything equal to the Qur'an in eloquence, rhyme and superb meaning, they could not, under any circumstance, produce anything like it. Nay, they could not do it even though they cooperate together for the purpose and support one another all they can." (*Alucy's Commentary*.)]

The Qur'an has inculcated all manners of social behaviour and encompassed every human concern. It has set before us the last word conforming with sound reason, in matters of beliefs, in dealing with men, in conduct and in matters of private and public life. Indeed it left no single concern of man without dealing with it in full detail and prescribing the right means for the conduct thereof.

The culture of the Qur'an is by far the best culture the world has ever known since the beginning of creation. Every good feature of the present-day civilisation had long been inculcated by Isam. 1Those features of the present-day civilisation which were not taken from Islam are of indifferent value and Islam could offer higher and better codes in comparison thereto.

One may easily put this theory to the test and one is sure to find that it holds good in every instance one may choose to take.

It will be sufficient for the critic to read the history of Islam in its earlier days to be convinced of the

truth of this assertion. The behaviour of the Muslims and their fair dealing at the time leave no room for improvement; so much so that they were thus addressed in the Qur'an:

"كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ"

["Ye are the greatest people that were ever raised for the benefit of mankind." (*Alucy's Commentary.*)]

I would like to say here that the translations of the Qur'an into foreign languages should not be considered dependable nor be regarded in any way as a true representation of the Qur'an. They fall ignominously short of the original, and, at best, they are no more than a mere approximation thereto. The eloquence and style of the Qur'an are inimitable and no translation could ever make the same impression on the reader's mind as the Qur'an does. Even Arabic commentators on the Qur'an have failed, in many instances, to give all probable meanings of verses. This may be due to the fact that the verses dealing, for instance, with medicine, astronomy and other subjects could only be rightly interpreted by those who are well-versed in these matters provided they are not swayed by commentators' opinions or by what they have heard from the learned people regarding the verses in question.

It is natural that every one can discuss a given subject only to the extent to which his knowledge permits, or to which contemporary science has reached.

This may perhaps be the significance of the Prophet's saying (peace be on him) that "the Qur'an has an exoteric as well as an esoteric meaning." It should be remembered, however, that both exoteric and esoteric interpretations point to the Lord's greatness, His oneness and the marvels of His creation, whatever the interpretation may be.

It is for this reason that people of all times have benefited in varying degrees from the Qur'an. Indeed it is impossible for any one, no matter how learned or skilled he may be, to interpret completely the whole text of the Qur'an. At most he could give the right interpretation in so far as the subject in which he excels is concerned, but he would fail to do so as regards other subjects in which he does not reach the same standard of excellence. The spiritualist will deal fully with it from the spiritualistic standpoint while the writer will appreciate and explain its fine points of style and eloquence and the physician will deal with its medical verses and disclose the secret of what was made lawful and unlawful in foods and drinks.

The jurist will interpret the laws and principles given therein while the moralist will deal success-

fully with the verses of conduct and so on ; to every scientist or man of learning his allotted sphere.

The just critic will therefore reject the idea that this incomparable book is the effort of a genius or the work of a talented writer, for man can only excel in but one single art or subject particularly if the subject happens to be one of those which the Qur'an has treated at length and with which the backward Arab people were unacquainted.

It is not conceivable that the Arabs should have inquired, at the time, into such subjects, much less that they should have excelled in them.

The uncivilised and backward state of the Arabs at that time is too well-known to dwell upon. The sphere of description in the Arab environment was necessarily a very limited one. Indeed the wild imagination of the Arab could only find expression in such themes as a large beautiful eye, a fierce raid, a deep thrust or a piled-up trencher, etc.

These themes are very far removed from the subjects discussed in the Qur'an which include such themes as the oneness of the Creator, investing Him with attributes of greatness and perfection, preaching indifference to the world and urging to kind treatment and the purging of souls of the taints of wickedness, etc., etc.

The communicator of this Book had been brought up under the least favourable circumstances, in a backward state of civilisation and among a people who were steeped in a Stygian darkness of ignorance and superstitions. The effect of environments could not be overestimated. In the ordinary way, no mortal could have escaped the dire influence of such environment; but Muhammad's soul remained uncontaminated.

To the sound reason, this could only have been due to a benign influence from on high; and the Qur'an which Muhammad brought to the world could be no other than the word of Allah revealed to him for the salvation of mankind.

This fact has been admitted by many European writers some of whom we quote below in recognition of their sense of fairness and equity.

Doctor Maurice, the French Orientalist, writes in a laudatory article on the Qur'an published in "La Presse Fracaise Romane":

"We venture to say that the Qur'an is the greatest book which eternal Providence has revealed to a prophet of mankind. It contained songs for their happiness far sweeter than those of the philosophers of Greece, and included praise to the Creator of the heavens and earth, and glorification of a beneficent God.

"The Qur'an may well be regarded as an academy of science for scientists, a lexicon for etymologists, a grammar book for grammarians, a book of prosody for poets and an encyclopædia of laws and legislation. Indeed no other book anterior to the Qur'an could be held equal to a single chapter thereof."

In his book *Islam and Muhammad,* De la Vinisette writes : "The Qur'an is the basis on which devolve the affairs of this world and the hereafter. Jurisprudence, unity of God, principles of rights and retribution, social systems and codes of justice are all detailed in the Qur'an. In other words, the Holy Qur'an is the charter and constitution of the Muslim Faith which affords the most adequate means for securing the welfare of men in this world and ensuring their salvation in the next."

Many are the testimonies volunteered by European writers in favour of the Qur'an and it would indeed be a lengthy process should we wish to quote such testimonies in detail.

In fine, there could be no more fitting description of this Holy Book than the Lord's saying concerning it :

" وانه لكتاب عزيز لا يأتيه الباطل من بين يديه ولا من خلفه تنزيل من حكيم حميد "

[“It is an incomparable Book which yields to no abrogation or distortion, and unto which no falsehood could find a way from whatever side. It is a missive from the Wise Lord to whom praise is due for the bounties He bestowed upon mankind.” (*Baidawy's Commentary*.)]

II

In the preceding section, we have discussed the miraculous nature of the Qur'an and advanced many proofs in testimony of its Divine origin. The discussion would not however be complete without a short survey of the subject matter of the Book itself; we, therefore, give in the following pages a few quotations from this Holy Book treating of diverse subjects and leave it to the reader to judge for himself the truth underlying them.

Unity of God

To begin with, we quote what the Qur'an says concerning the unity of God:

”لَوْ كَانَ فِيهِمَا آلِهَةٌ إِلَّا اللهُ لَفَسَدَتَا فَسُبْحَانَ اللهِ رَبِّ الْعَرْشِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ . لَا يُسْأَلُ عَمَّا يَفْعَلُ وَهُمْ يُسْأَلُونَ“

[“Had there been in heavens and earth other gods besides Allah, they would both have surely fallen into disorder on account of the difference and contrariety between them; so glory be to

Allah the Lord of Might and Power, who holdeth sway over all things and is above what the unbelievers attribute unto Him.

"He shall not be questioned concerning what He doth but they shall be called to account for what they do." (*Baidawy's Commentary*.)]

" وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ الرَّحْمٰنُ وَلَدًا سُبْحَانَهُ بَلْ عِبَادٌ مُكْرَمُونَ .
لَا يَسْبِقُونَهُ بِالْقَوْلِ وَهُمْ بِأَمْرِهِ يَعْمَلُونَ . يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا
خَلْفَهُمْ وَلَا يَشْفَعُونَ إِلَّا لِمَنِ ارْتَضَى وَهُمْ مِنْ خَشْيَتِهِ مُشْفِقُونَ . وَمَنْ
يَقُلْ مِنْهُمْ إِنِّي إِلٰهٌ مِنْ دُونِهِ فَذٰلِكَ نَجْزِيهِ جَهَنَّمَ كَذٰلِكَ نَجْزِي
الظَّالِمِينَ "

["The unbelievers say that the Beneficent Allah hath begotten issue;[1] glory be to Him for He is above what they say. Nay, the angels are but His honoured servants created by Him and are not His issue. They speak not except what He ordaineth and never do they act against His bidding. Nothing there is that He knoweth not of their future and past, and they intercede (plead) not save for whom He pleaseth and for fear of Him they tremble.

1. Khuzaha, an unbelieving tribe, alleged that angels are the daughters of God.

"And whoever, among the angels or creatures, should say: 'Surely I am a god besides Allah,' such will We recompense with hell for thus do We recompense him who attributeth partners to Allah and claimeth godship for himself" *(Baidawy's Commentary.)*]

" وَإِلٰهُكُمْ إِلٰهٌ وَاحِدٌ لَا إِلٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الرَّحْمٰنُ الرَّحِيمُ "

["The God Who meriteth worship is only one having no partner to be worshipped with Him; there is no Deity worthy of worship but He, He is the Most Merciful, the Beneficent." (*Baidawy's Commentary.*)]

In these verses, the Qur'an has established, once for all, that there is no Deity but Allah and that prophets are definitely excluded from godship. Nay, they have no right to intercede or plead for anyone unless it pleases the Lord that they should do so. Could there be then a more conclusive evidence of their exclusion from godship than the very words of the Qur'an?

Yet, it pleases the missionaries of Europe and America to convey the idea that Muhammad called men to worship him and that the Muslims worship Muhammad to the exclusion of God. This is a lie! The reason for this unfounded libel is not hard to

find. They wish to portray Islam, before the eyes of the world, as a pagan religion and a savage creed ; but truth shall prevail one day and the world shall know of True Islam no matter how dark missionaries choose to paint it.

All-Pervading Providence

" الله لا اله الا هو الحى القيوم لا تاخذه سنة و لا نوم له
مافى السموات و ما فى الارض من ذا الذى يشفع عنده الا باذنه يعلم
ما بين ايديهم وما خلفهم و لا يحيطون بشىء من علمه الا بما شاء
وسع كرسيه السموات و الارض و لا يؤوده حفظهما و هو العلى
العظيم "

["Allah, besides Whom there is no God worthy of worship, the Eternal, the Self-subsistent, by Whom all creation subsisteth ; slumber overtaketh Him not nor doth sleep ; His whatsoever is in heavens and whatsoever is on earth. Who is there, in the heavens or on the earth, that can intercede with Him without His permission, for none is equal or like unto Him. He knoweth men's future and past, yet nought of His knowledge can they grasp save what He willeth them to know. His knowledge extendeth over the heavens and the earth, and the preservation

and control of both burdeneth Him not ; He is the Most High, the Great, none to compare with Him." (*Baidawy's Commentary*.)]

Worship of gods other than Allah

To those who worship gods other than Allah the Qur'an saith :

" يَـاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ ضُرِبَ مَثَلٌ فَاسْتَمِعُوا لَهُ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ تَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللهِ لَنْ يَّخْلُقُوْا ذُبَابًا وَّ لَوِ اجْتَمَعُوْا لَهُ وَ اِنْ يَّسْلُبْهُمُ الذُّبَابُ شَيْئًا لَّا يَسْتَنْقِذُوْهُ مِنْهُ ضَعُفَ الطَّالِبُ وَالْمَطْلُوْبُ "

["O men ! a parable revealing a strange case is set forth unto you, wherefore hearken attentively unto it. Surely the gods whom you invoke to the exclusion of Allah cannot create a fly, small as it is, even though they should all assemble for its creation ! And should a fly carry off aught from them, they cannot resist and are unable to recover what is taken from it. Weak indeed are they (worshipper and worshipped or idol and fly). (*Baidawy's Commentary*.)]

State of Unbelievers

Of those who disbelieved, the Qur'an saith :

" وَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا اَعْمَالُهُمْ كَسَرَابٍ بِقِيْعَةٍ يَّحْسَبُهُ الظَّمْاٰنُ مَاۤءً

حتى اذا جاءه لم يجده شيئا و وجد الله عنده فوفاه حسابه و الله

سريع الحساب . أو كظلمات في بحر لجي يغشاه موج من فوقه موج من

فوقه سحاب ظلمات بعضها فوق بعض اذا أخرج يده لم يكد يراها

و من لم يجعل الله له نورا فما له من نور "

[“And as for those who disbelieved, they find that their deeds which they have deemed acceptable unto Allah, are void and disappointing in their results, like the mirage in a barren plain (desert) which the thirsty, in his great need, deems to be water ; when he cometh to what he thought to be the place thereof, he findeth naught of what he imagined, and there findeth Allah to reckon with and is fully paid by Him in recompense of his deeds, for swift is the reckoning of Allah.

“Or (their deeds) like utter darkness in a deep sea covered by billows riding upon billows, above which are clouds that hide the stars and their light : layers of utter darkness one upon another, that when he reacheth forth his hand he could scarce see it ! And whomsoever Allah depriveth of guidance, will he have no light to guide him. ” (*Baidawy's Commentary.*)]

Vicissitudes of Time

Yet another striking parable, showing the way of the world and the changes to which men are subject, is the following verse:

„ اِنَّمَا مَثَلُ الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَاءٍ اَنْزَلْنٰهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَاخْتَلَطَ بِهٖ
نَبَاتُ الْاَرْضِ مِمَّا يَاْكُلُ النَّاسُ وَالْاَنْعَامُ حَتّٰى اِذَا اَخَذَتِ الْاَرْضُ
زُخْرُفَهَا وَازَّيَّنَتْ وَظَنَّ اَهْلُهَا اَنَّهُمْ قٰدِرُوْنَ عَلَيْهَا اَتٰهَا اَمْرُنَا
لَيْلًا اَوْ نَهَارًا فَجَعَلْنٰهَا حَصِيْدًا كَاَنْ لَّمْ تَغْنَ بِالْاَمْسِ كَذٰلِكَ
نُفَصِّلُ الْاٰيٰتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَّتَفَكَّرُوْنَ “

[" Verily the strange way of this world's life, in its rapid flight, its short lived prosperity and its deluding of men, is like unto the water which We send down from heaven, and which causeth the herbage of earth, such as vegetables and grass, of which men and cattle eat, to grow luxuriantly and entwine together, till the earth puteth forth its beauteous raiment and is decked out in all the glory of plants and flowers of different hues, and its people think they are able to reap its harvest, Our behest to destroy it, cometh to it by night or by day and We render it mown down as though it had never teemed with fertility but yesterday. Thus do We make clear Our signs to a people who reflect for

they benefit thereby." (*Baidawy's Commentary.*)]

God's Omnipotence

" اِنَّمَا أَمْرُهُ اِذَا أَرَادَ شَيْئًا أَنْ يَقُولَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ .

فَسُبْحَانَ الَّذِی بِيَدِهِ مَلَكُوتُ كُلِّ شَیْءٍ وَ اِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ "

["Verily the way of Allah when He willeth aught, is but to say to it, Be, and It is. So glory be to Him, He holdeth sway over all things and to Him shall all men, believers and unbelievers, be brought back." (*Baidawy's Commentary.*)]

" وَ هُوَ الْقَاهِرُ فَوْقَ عِبَادِهِ وَ هُوَ الْحَكِيمُ الْخَبِيرُ "

[" And Allah is Almighty and Supreme over His servants ; and He is wise in His ways and ministrations, and is cognisant of the secret state of his servants." (*Baidawy's Commentary.*)]

His Omniscience

"وَمَا تَكُونُ فِی شَأْنٍ وَ مَا تَتْلُو مِنْهُ مِنْ قُرْآنٍ وَ لَا تَعْمَلُونَ مِنْ عَمَلٍ

اِلَّا كُنَّا عَلَيْكُمْ شُهُوداً اِذْ تُفِيضُونَ فِيهِ وَ مَا يَعْزُبُ عَنْ رَبِّكَ مِنْ

مِثْقَالِ ذَرَّةٍ فِی الْاَرْضِ وَ لَا فِی السَّمَاءِ وَ لَا اَصْغَرَ مِنْ ذٰلِكَ وَ لَا اَكْبَرَ

اِلَّا فِی كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ "

[" And you shall not be engaged in any affair, nor do you recite concerning it any text of the Qur'an, nor do you pursue any work, great or small, but We are witnesses over you and cognisant thereof when you are engrossed in it; and not the weight of an atom in the whole existence lieth concealed from thy Lord, nor is there aught smaller or greater than that, but it is recorded in the Preserved Tablet (Book of Decrees)." (*Baidaway's Commentary*.)]

" وَعِنْدَهُ مَفَاتِحُ الْغَيْبِ لَا يَعْلَمُهَا إِلَّا هُوَ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَمَا تَسْقُطُ مِنْ وَرَقَةٍ إِلَّا يَعْلَمُهَا وَلَا حَبَّةٍ فِي ظُلُمَاتِ الْأَرْضِ وَلَا رَطْبٍ وَلَا يَابِسٍ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ "

[" And with Him are the repositories of unknown things, none knoweth them but He, He knoweth their set times and the wisdom of expediting or delaying their occurrence: He knoweth whatsoever is in the land or sea; and so great and comprehensive is His knowledge that there falleth not a leaf but He knows it, neither a grain in the darknesses of earth, nor a green nor a sere thing but it is all in the Book of Divine Decrees." (*Baidawy's Commentary*.)]

" وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ وَنَعْلَمُ مَا تُوَسْوِسُ بِهِ نَفْسُهُ وَنَحْنُ

أقرب اليه من حبل الوريد "

["And certainly We have created man, and We know what passeth in his mind, and are more informed of his state than any one for We are closer to him than his life vein." (*Baidaway's Commentary.*)]

Finality of His Will

" وان يمسسك الله بضر فلا كاشف له الا هو وان يردك بخير فلا راد لفضله يصيب به من يشاء من عباده و هو الغفور الرحيم "

[" And if Allah should afflict you with misfortune as sickness or poverty, then there is none to lift it but He; and if He willeth you any good as health or prosperity, there is none to stop His favour; He will bestow His grace on whomsoever He pleaseth among His servants, and He is the Forgiving, the Merciful, whose mercy is extended to those who obey His commands, and His forgiveness to those who never despair of His pardon.") (*Baidawy's Commentary.*)]

" ما يفتح الله للناس من رحمة فلا ممسك لها و ما يمسك فلا مرسل له من بعده و هو العزيز الحكيم "

[" Whatsoever mercy Allah sendeth unto men as prosperity, peace, health and knowledge,

there is none to withhold it; and whatsoever He withholdeth, there is none to send forth after His keeping it back, He is the Mighty, the Wise who doth nothing except with perfect knowledge. (*Baidawy's Commentary.*)]

" نَحْنُ قَسَمْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ مَعِيْشَتَهُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَ رَفَعْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ دَرَجَاتٍ "

[" It is We who distribute among men their livelihood in this world's life wherefore they are unable to secure it for themselves though it is their personal concern; and We have exalted some of them by grades above others, and distinguished between them in livelihood." (*Baidawy's Commentary.*)]

Control of Creation

" قُلِ اللّٰهُمَّ مَالِكَ الْمُلْكِ تُؤْتِي الْمُلْكَ مَنْ تَشَاءُ وَ تَنْزِعُ الْمُلْكَ مِمَّنْ تَشَاءُ وَ تُعِزُّ مَنْ تَشَاءُ وَ تُذِلُّ مَنْ تَشَاءُ بِيَدِكَ الْخَيْرُ اِنَّكَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ. تُوْلِجُ اللَّيْلَ فِي النَّهَارِ وَ تُوْلِجُ النَّهَارَ فِي اللَّيْلِ وَ تُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ وَ تُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتَ مِنَ الْحَيِّ وَ تَرْزُقُ مَنْ تَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ "

[" Say: O Allah, Possessor of all power, Thou givest oft his power what Thou wilt, to whom-

soever Thou pleasest and takest away power from whomsoever Thou pleasest; and Thou exaltest in this world and the next, whomsoever Thou pleasest extending thereunto Thy favour and support; and Thou abasest in this life and the hereafter, whomsoever Thou pleasest imposing theron failure and ignominy; in Thine hands lieth all good and verily Thou hast power over all things. Thou causest the night to pass into the day, and Thou causest the day to pass into the night through the succession thereof; and Thou bringest forth the living from the dead and the dead from the living by the generation of animals from matter and matter from animals; and Thou givest sustenance to whomsoever Thou pleasest beyond all measure." (*Baidawy's Commentary*.)]

We should like to point out here that present-day physicists know more of the theory of the generation of life from matter than the commentarors of the Qur'an knew.

Warning against God's Wrath

To the ungrateful people who invoke the Lord in distress and forget Him in prosperity, the Qur'an saith:

” وَاِذَا مَسَّكُمُ الضُّرُّ فِى الْبَحْرِ ضَلَّ مَنْ تَدْعُونَ اِلَّا اِيَّاهُ فَلَمَّا
نَجّٰكُمْ اِلَى الْبَرِّ اَعْرَضْتُمْ وَكَانَ الْاِنْسَانُ كَفُورًا . اَفَاَمِنْتُمْ اَنْ
يَخْسِفَ بِكُمْ جَانِبَ الْبَرِّ اَوْ يُرْسِلَ عَلَيْكُمْ حَاصِبًا ثُمَّ لَا تَجِدُوا لَكُمْ
وَكِيلًا . اَمْ اَمِنْتُمْ اَنْ يُعِيدَكُمْ فِيهِ تَارَةً اُخْرٰى فَيُرْسِلَ عَلَيْكُمْ
قَاصِفًا مِنَ الرِّيحِ فَيُغْرِقَكُمْ بِمَا كَفَرْتُمْ ثُمَّ لَا تَجِدُوا لَكُمْ عَلَيْنَا بِهِ
تَبِيعًا “

[“And when distress afflicteth you out at sea and ye fear drowning, ye remember none of those whom you invoke except Allah to whom ye turn for deliverance; yet when He saveth you from drowning and bringeth you safely to the land, ye turn aside in thanklessness, for man is ever ungrateful.

“What! do you then feel secure that Allah will not turn the land upside down with you on it or that He will not send upon you a whirlwind that smiteth you with gravel? Then shall ye find no protector to protect you therefrom.

“Or do you feel secure that Allah will not cause you to put back to sea another time for some pressing need, and then send upon you a fierce gale and thus drown you on account of

your thanklessness? Then shall ye find no helper against Us." (*Baidawy's Commentary.*)]

Sustenance of all Creation and Cognizance of its Conditions

" وَمَا مِنْ دَآبَّةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا عَلَى اللهِ رِزْقُهَا وَيَعْلَمُ مُسْتَقَرَّهَا وَمُسْتَوْدَعَهَا كُلٌّ فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ "

["No animal is there on earth but Allah provideth it with nourishment and life out of mercy and kindness; and He knoweth its haunts in life, and its resting-place after death; for every animal and the condition thereof is given in the Book of Divine Decrees." (*Baidawy's Commentary.*)]

" وَلِلَّهِ خَزَآئِنُ السَّمٰوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلٰكِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ "

["In the hands of Allah are all the means of livelihood and the destinies of men, but the hypocrites do not understand for they know not Allah." (*Baidawy's Commentary.*)]

Counsels and Exhortations

The Holy Qur'an teems with goodly counsels and exhortations; and the following are a few quotations:

” خذ العفو و أمر بالعرف و أعرض عن الجاهلين “

[“ Use indulgence with sinners and forgive their aggression, and enjoin good deeds, and return not the evil of the ignorant with a like evil.” (*Alucy's Commentary*.)]

” و جزآء سيئة سيئة مثلها فمن عفا وأصلح فاجره على الله “

[“ The recompense of evil is a like evil, but he who forgiveth the offender and reconcileth himself to his enemy and overlooketh the harm done him, will the Lord afford ample recompense.” (*Alucy's Commentary*.)]

” ادع الى سبيل ربك بالحكمة والموعظة الحسنة و جادلهم
بالتي هي أحسن “

[“Call unto Islam with wise discourse and good counsel and argue with the disputants in the kindliest way.” (*Baidawy's Commentary*.)]

” و لتكن منكم أمة يدعون الى الخير و يأمرون بالمعروف
و ينهون عن المنكر و أولئك هم المفلحون “

[“ And let there be from among you a people who call unto righteousness, enjoin the good and

forbid the evil, for those will be afforded complete success." (*Baidawy's Commentary.*)]

It would be impossible to quote here all the great sayings of the Qur'an, but we trust that the few we have quoted of its salient features will suffice to give an insight into that glorious Religion, and should it lead to the guidance of only a few, our efforts would be more than amply repaid.

May the Almighty Allah shower His mercies upon mankind and guide them to that wherein lies their salvation in this world and in the Hereafter. Amen!

THE END